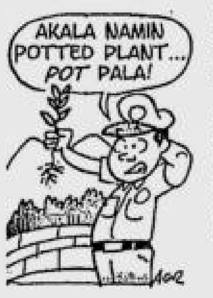
Strunk arrested, jailed by US marshals in California

Story below, Col. 1

Session Road goes to pot


AKALA NAMIN POTTED PLANT... POT PALA!

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A two-foot high weed growing in a flower box in the middle of Session Road was sur-

SESSION/ A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

June 12 not a holiday, June 13 is, says Palace

THE DAUGHTER of the President who changed Philippine Independence Day from July 4 to June 12 declared yesterday that that date will not be a holiday.

June 12 will be a regular working day, the Palace said.

Instead June 13, a Friday, will be a special non-working day for both government and private companies.

JUNE 12/ A17

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, May 15, 2003 ★★ 66 pages / 6 sections / vol. 18 / no. 156 P15 website: www.inq7.net

3rd OFW killed in Saudi

19 Filipinos hurt, 5 still in hospital

By Blanche S. Rivera *in Manila*
and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE TRIPLE blasts that rocked three expatriate housing compounds Monday night in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, killed not two but three Filipinos.

The third Filipino was yesterday identified by Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) chief Virgilio Angelo as Serafin Igos Hernandez, age between 45 and 50, and an employee of the Vinnell Arabia Co.

The other two were Rogelio Pababero, 61, of the Al Jadewell Water Treatment Co., and Getulio Templo, 47, an electronics and communications specialist.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said 19 other Filipinos were among the 194 injured in the blasts that were widely blamed on the al-Qaida network of Saudi-born Islamic militant Osama bin Laden.

In Lucena City, a grief-stricken Salvacion Pababero is disappointed at the way the Owwa is handling the tragedy.

"My husband Rogelio was a registered overseas Filipino worker, and yet no one from the Owwa bothered to visit us here and see how we are coping," the widow said bitterly. "The ones coming to our house are mostly media people who want to interview us. No one from the government has ever visited us or coordinated with us since the news broke out."

She added: "When will his body arrive? We don't have any idea, except from news reports."

Angelo said the remains of the three men could "take longer" to be repatriated because of difficulties in coordinating with Saudi police. He said the medico-legal reports required for the transport of the remains to the Philippines would have to be issued by the Saudi police and might even require court proceedings.

"That's the major issue. It's the only thing that will cause the delay of the repatriation," Angelo said in a phone interview.

Salvacion said the last time she spoke

3RD OFW/ A18

THE DEVASTATION wrought by the suicide bombings midnight Monday in the suburbs of the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh is surveyed by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who says the attacks bear the stamp of the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden. AP

US confusion over body count traced to British

WASHINGTON—First, Saudi officials placed the death toll at 20 and later revised it to 29. Then, Agence France Presse (AFP) quoted unnamed officials at the US state department as saying that as many as 91 had died in Monday midnight's suicide bombings in Riyadh.

Now, AFP is quoting US officials as saying that the final death toll will most likely be anywhere between the Saudi figure and the earlier US estimate—about 50 fatalities. *(Related story below)*

Another US official, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, said the toll of 91 dead was an estimate by British authorities on the scene of the attacks in Riyadh, noting that they had arrived at the number by calculating the number of residents still unaccounted for after Monday's car bomb attacks.

The official, however, said that figure was being revisited because many residents of the most badly damaged facility—a building that housed unmarried men—were not at home at the time of the blasts.

That official and other authorities said the final death toll would

US CONFUSION/ A18

FBI to join hunt for al-Qaida masterminds

RIYADH—Troops scoured Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, soon to be joined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in the hunt for the suspected al-Qaida masterminds of suicide bombings in Riyadh that killed at least 34 people.

At least eight Americans were among the dead pulled from the wreckage of three expatriate housing complexes after the blasts, which US President George W. Bush said showed the war on terror launched after Sept. 11, 2001 was far from over.

"We've destroyed about one half of al-Qaida, the top operators of al-Qaida, and that's good. But we've got more work to do," Bush said.

The Saudi interior ministry raised its death toll to 34 on Wednesday, saying the five additional fatalities were a Filipino, an Australian of Lebanese origin, a Briton, an Irish woman and an unidentified person.

FBI Director Robert Mueller said a team of agents would leave for Saudi Arabia on Wednesday to help the authorities there, who lost track of 19 al-Qaida suspects last week after a shootout in the capital. The group consisted of 17 Saudis, a Yemeni, and an Iraqi with Kuwaiti and Canadian citizenship.

The Saudi ambassador to London said that group was to blame, and a high-level Saudi security official said the Army was erecting checkpoints all over the vast desert kingdom.

"By the will of God, we will find them. We are introducing tough new security measures and asking everyone to cooperate," the official told Reuters.

US and Saudi officials said the attacks bore all the hallmarks of Saudi-born Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, which has been blamed for the 2001 at-

FBI/ A18

Marcos 'son' sent to jail by US court

NEW YORK—A Filipino swindler posing as a son of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and boyfriend of a Filipino actress has been sentenced to more than 12 years in prison for running a phony gold certificate scheme that cheated victims out of some $80 million.

Edilberto del Carmen, alias Edilberto Marcos, 41, who had lived in California, Manhattan and Hong Kong, was sentenced to a prison term of 12 years and seven months on Monday, prosecutors said on Tuesday.

Del Carmen is known in Philippine show biz circles as a former boyfriend of actress Angelu de Leon. De Leon kept Del Carmen (who was using his Marcos alias) company in the United States in December 2000.

During an interview in the talk show

MARCOS/ A17

Why Edong wants Danding to run for president

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WHY does Sen. Edgardo Angara want business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to be the candidate for president of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino in next year's elections?

"No. 1, because I think the times call for the qualities that Danding possesses. He's decisive, he's got a successful track record, he's a successful entrepreneur," Angara, LDP president, said.

"Despite the criticism that he is a crony of President Marcos, I don't think you can point to any shenanigan he has done," Angara said.

"In fact the only criticism against him is that he allegedly misused the (coco) levy but that levy was only initially between P5 billion and P9 billion. How much is the investment out of that levy now? Over P100 billion. No one can say that he spirited out the proceeds of that levy or that he appropriated a single centavo of that levy. It's just a general allegation that he's a Marcos crony and he's going to be a Pacman. But that is meaningless allegations given this track record," the LDP president said.

Cojuangco is chair of San Miguel Corp. and founder of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Angara said there was nothing wrong if LDP chose Cojuangco , who, according to him, would be supported by "50-per-

WHY EDONG/ A17

Pinay says Japanese cops made her sue GI for rape

TOKYO—The trial of a US Marine officer accused of attempting to rape a Filipina in Okinawa has taken a twist after she admitted to having filed a criminal complaint under pressure from Japanese investigators, a defense lawyer said Wednesday.

"I had been asking to drop the charges but (police and prosecutors) would not listen," lawyer Saiman Takaesu quoted the woman as testifying in court Tuesday.

No public records of testimony are available in Japan for criminal cases. The name of the Filipina was also withheld.

The woman said she had broken down in tears on Dec. 12 when prosecutors finally turned down her plea to drop the charges, Takaesu said.

PINAY/ A19

Strunk arrested by US marshals

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Philip C. Tubeza

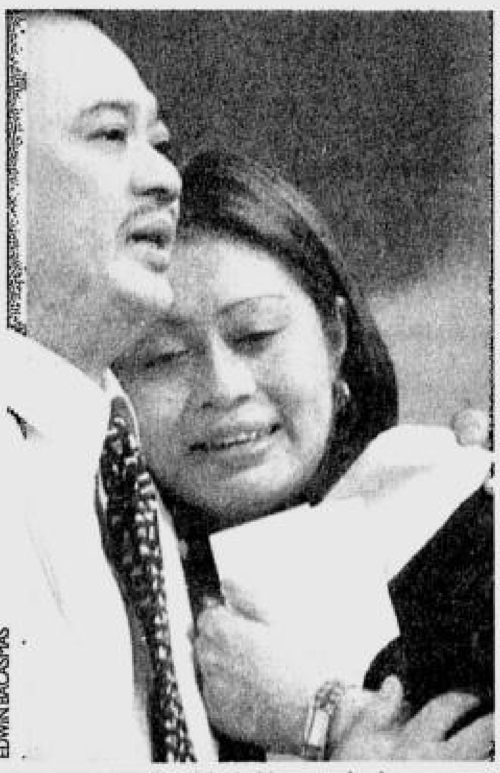
NIDA Blanca's American husband was arrested on May 13 in the United States and is being held in an undisclosed federal detention facility.

Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong said he received a "short communication" yesterday morning from the US justice department saying that Roger Lawrence Strunk was arrested by US marshals in the eastern district of California. He said he had no knowledge of where Strunk was actually arrested.

Strunk is the principal suspect in Blanca's murder in November 2001. His co-accused, Filipino Philip Medel Jr., is in custody.

Datumanong said Strunk's "provisional arrest"—a step that he described as "the first stage in the extradition process"—was based on a warrant of arrest issued by Pasig Judge Alex Quiros last Feb. 21.

STRUNK/ A17



EDWIN BACASMAS

THE FATHER Ana Marie Liamzon had not seen in 18 years makes a surprise appearance at her graduation from the AMA Computer College.

Pa, daughter reunited; GMA close to tears

By Dona Pazzibugan

IT WAS a scene straight from a sudsy *telenovela* which brought the guest of honor on the verge of tears publicly for the first time.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor at the AMA Computer University's graduation rites held at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City yesterday morning.

AMA officials decided to put a dramatic touch to the event. It had to do with one of the graduates, Ana Marie Liamzon, delivering a speech on behalf of this year's graduates offering their

PA, DAUGHTER/ A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/15/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FrontPage

GMA vows no letup vs MILF

By Carlito Pablo and Martin P. Marfil

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced an escalation in punitive actions and "political and military measures" directed against the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, saying a "retreat now would only invite more depredations."

Only the other day, Malacañang gave the MILF a June-1 ultimatum to comply with certain conditions it had set for the rebel group to avoid being labeled a terrorist organization.

"I have the duty to protect the national interest from greater harm," the President said in a speech at the commencement exercises of the AMA Computer University at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

In his regular briefing, Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President might "perhaps (but) not specifically" take up the Mindanao problem with United States President George Bush when they meet in Washington on May 19.

"It's expected that regional security will be discussed," Bunye said.

US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone earlier said that Washington was considering tagging the MILF as a foreign terrorist organization like it earlier did the Communist Party of the Philippines and its related organizations.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal reiterated the conditions that the MILF must meet: surrender the "terrorists" involved in the recent bombings and attacks against civilians in Mindanao; renounce links with international terrorists, and stop all forms of terrorist activities.

If they fail to heed this ultimatum, the 12,500-strong rebel group would be treated as terrorists, Ms Macapagal said.

"The people would like to read this from the lips of the MILF leadership," she said.

The government has offered P50 million for the capture of the MILF leadership, P25 million of which is allotted for the arrest or "neutralization" of the group's top five leaders, including MILF chair Hashim Salamat.

The President said that anything short of the conditions set would be "considered half measures, which will not do."

She said the government will "not acknowledge false offers of peace or succumb to political pressure."

Malacañang earlier scrapped the scheduled May 10 exploratory talks with the MILF in Kuala Lumpur following the attack on Siocon, North Cotabato last May 4 that killed 22 people.

To prevent the conflict from degenerating into a religious war between Christians and Muslims, the President said the military campaign in Mindanao was "not a fight against Muslims."

"This is a fight against terror being waged by all decent and civilized Filipinos," she said.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Narciso Abaya meanwhile said yesterday that foreign terrorists are already in Mindanao, as confirmed by the capture of Fathur al Ghozi, the Indonesian who admitted to being a member of the Southeast Asia-based Jemaah Islamiya terror group.

"We have not captured (anyone else) other than Fathur Al Ghozi but the reports are persistent that there are indeed foreign terrorists inside Mindanao," Abaya said in an interview.

Al Ghozi, who is believed to have participated in the Dec. 30 bombings in Metro Manila, was arrested in Manila in January 2002 and later led authorities to a cache of explosives in Gen. Santos City.

In another and more recent case, police officials said the bombing of the Sasa wharf in Davao City on April 2 was carried out by foreigners, apparently Indonesians.

Police earlier identified the five Indonesians as Zulkifli, Nasuradin, Hadji Akmed, Sulaiman and Hamiyah.

While the report on the presence of foreign terrorists was nothing "new" and they did not expect more bomb attacks, Abaya said military forces were always on the alert.

No way to stop Koronadal blast, says AFP chief

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Narciso Abaya yesterday said the military could not have prevented the bombing of Koronadal City even as he lashed out at those criticizing the military for its alleged failure of intelligence.

"Even if you had prior information that they are going to bomb the center of Koronadal or the public market, the public market is such a huge area and during a shopping day, it would be almost impossible (to prevent an attack)," he said.

A local official earlier blamed "intelligence failure" for the bombing of Koronadal City in South Cotabato on May 10.

"It is because of the wrong notion that only the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police are allotted intelligence funds that all blame is heaped on government security forces," Abaya said in a speech during the pinning of ranks on reserve officers at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday.

He noted that the Local Government Code empowers LGUs to allocate a percentage of their internal revenue allotment for intelligence.

Meanwhile, Army chief Gregorio Camiling has ordered the transfer of 500 soldiers from the 66th Infantry Battalion in Negros Oriental to the Mindanao provinces recently victimized by bomb attacks.

Lt. Col. Rolando Picar, commanding officer of the 66th IB based in Guihulngan town, said the assignment could last two to three months. *Martin Marfil, Metro Manila, and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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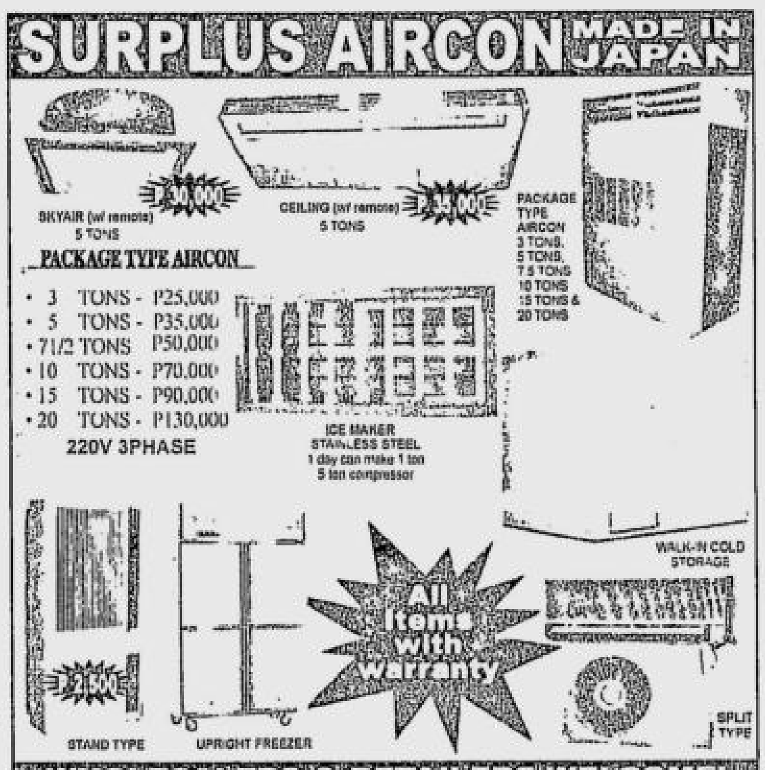
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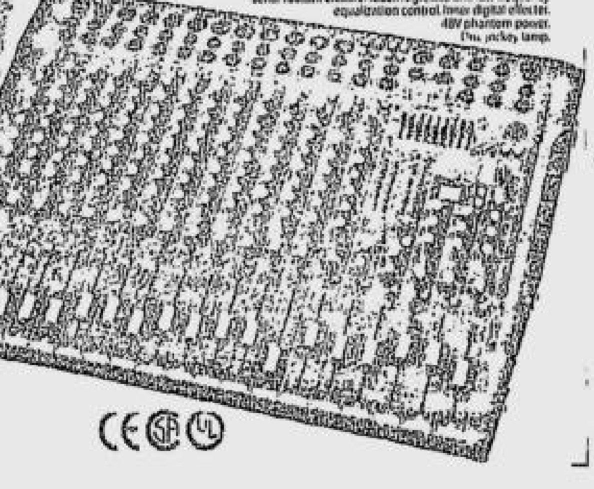
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Pinoys now SARS-free in HK

By Norman Bordadora and Dona Pazzibugan

THE TWO Filipinos in Hong Kong stricken with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome have recovered and been discharged from the hospital, according to the the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong.

Their discharge, said Consul General Victoria Bataclan, had made the entire Filipino community in Hong Kong SARS-free.

Bataclan said that standard operating procedure for former SARS patients dictated that the two Filipinos would have to be housed in a convalescent facility for several days before being allowed to leave and mix with the general population.

"With the precautions being taken by the Hong Kong administration and our countrymen, we hope that the Filipino community will stay SARS-free," the consul general said.

The development has strengthened the hand of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who yesterday decried as "unfair" the imposition of travel bans by several countries against Philippine citizens due to fears of SARS infection.

The Philippines is "winning the fight (against SARS) both in containing the threat internally and to prevent its entry or exit from the Philippines," the President said in a statement.

"Prohibitions being imposed against the mobility of our OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) are unfair and misplaced," Ms Macapagal said, without naming any country.

The labor department has alleged that Bahrain, Turkey and Lebanon were turning away Filipinos at their airports due to fears they may be carriers of the SARS virus.

Libya, Kuwait and Taiwan had earlier imposed travel bans on Filipinos because of SARS fears.

Ms Macapagal said she had ordered embassies to step up their information campaign and diplomatic measures to protect the right of Filipinos to travel and work abroad.

Negligible

Last week, Manila complained that the World Health Organization had "unfairly" designated the Philippines—with 10 SARS cases and two deaths so far—a "medium-risk" country, alongside Hong Kong and China, which had hundreds of cases each.

The Geneva-based health agency has since issued statements that the SARS threat in the Philippines is "negligible."

Restrictions on the travel of Filipino workers would be a severe blow to the economy, which relies on the remittances of more than seven million citizens working overseas as a major source of foreign currency.

The Department of Health said the country would be removed from the WHO list of SARS-infected countries if no new case of local transmission emerged by May 20.

Apparently acting on the instructions of the President, Foreign Secretary Blas Ople yesterday ordered all embassies and consulates abroad to be on the lookout for any acts of discrimination against Filipinos because of the "unfair" decision of the WHO.

"Although the WHO has already explained that the Philippines is not included in its travel advisory, the harm has been done in view of the flurry of travel advisories issued by other countries against Filipinos travelers," Ople said.

Ople said that SARS was a health issue and governments around the world should exercise caution to ensure that the development would not become a racial issue.

He called on Filipino diplomats to document and file complaints to the host government against acts of discrimination against Filipino tourists and workers.

"The WHO has made it clear that the Philippines has a negligible risk of SARS contamination because we have contained the disease well. There is no reason for other countries to turn away our workers and for employers to strip them of their jobs if they show no symptoms of the disease," Ople said.

Bunye goes under knife

PRESIDENTIAL spokesperson Ignacio Bunye was admitted last night at the Makati Medical Center due to a slipped disc.

He is expected to undergo "microsurgery" as early as today and will miss President Macapagal's trip to the US starting May 17.

In a phone interview from the hospital, Bunye said he was told that he would be up and about two days after the operation.

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Gloria names Erap crony special envoy

CONTROVERSIAL Estrada crony Amable R. Aguiluz V was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as special envoy yesterday.

Ms Macapagal said Aguiluz would be her special envoy to the Gulf Cooperation Council, an organization of six Persian Gulf states.

Its members are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

It is the first time a special envoy to the GCC was named.

Ms Macapagal announced his appointment during the graduation rites of AMA Computer University at the Araneta Coliseum yesterday.

Aguiluz is the founder and chair of the AMA computer school system.

Aguiluz was deposed President Joseph Estrada's presidential consultant on computer education.

In August 1998, he was named chair of the Presidential Commission on Year 2000 Compliance, whose job was to make sure all government and private firms have dealt with the so-called millennium or Y2K bug, a date-related computer problem.

A year later he stepped down as "Y2K czar" in disgrace after the INQUIRER reported that he abused his position to further his family's computer business.

The INQUIRER found out that a dummy company put up by the AMA Group of Companies sold computer cards to government agencies and private firms to make them Y2K-compliant.

Aguiluz denied this, saying he had divested himself of his interests from the AMA Group of Companies before assuming his government post.

Nevertheless because of the controversy, he resigned.

Estrada said he accepted Aguiluz's resignation because the charges were "serious."

Aguiluz was cleared of any wrongdoing by the joint Y2K congressional oversight committee in February 2000.

Ms Macapagal told the AMA graduates that she just signed Aguiluz's appointment papers that morning.

"As my special envoy to the Gulf (Cooperation Council), I want, if it's possible, Dr. Aguiluz to go to (Riyadh in Saudi Arabia) to extend my condolences to our Filipino families there who lost their loved ones in the bombing (last Monday)," she said in Filipino.

Villena; 56

VALENTIN Q. Villena, former intelligence officer of the the Economic Intelligence and Investigation Bureau, died yesterday of a heart attack. He was 56.

He is survived by his wife Angelina Morales Villena; children Robert and Cecille; Richard; Angelica Marie; Angelo Miguel; Catherine; and George; grandchildren Audrey, Ara and Gian Kobe; and sister Luz Eusebio.

His body lies at the Funeraria Rizal in Pasay City. Cremation will be held on Sunday at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque.

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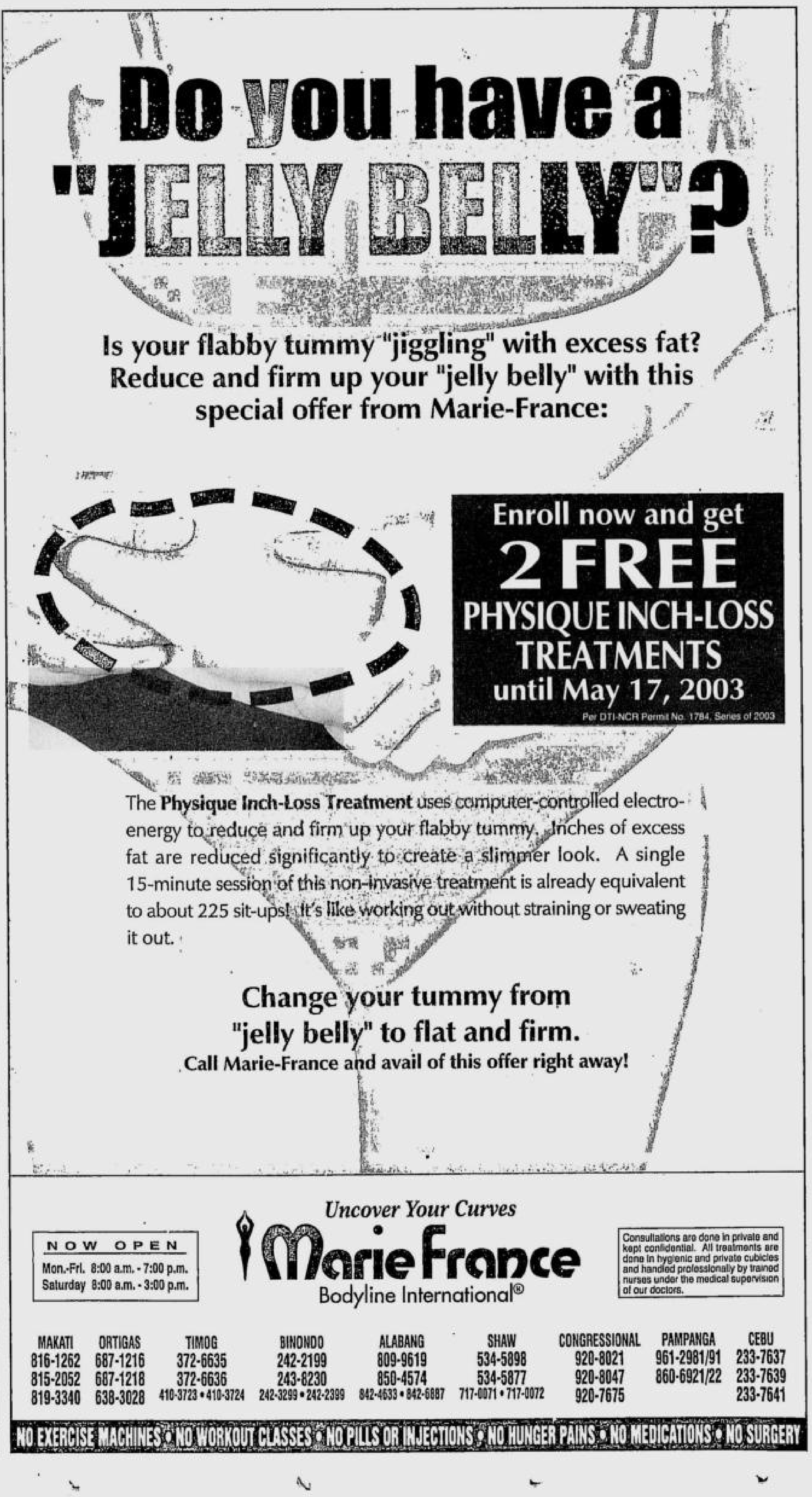
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OPEN LETTER TO COMELEC CHAIRMAN BENJAMIN ABALOS, SR.

We are writing to express our concern over the award of a P1.3 billion contract for the Automated Counting and Canvassing Phase (Phase II) of the Comprehensive Automated Election System and contract signing despite what appear to be serious flaws in the conduct of the bidding.

Through our respective associations, we represent a significant percentage of the IT industry of the Philippines. The opposition to the award of the contract is snowballing within the industry and even in other sectors of society, and it is the people's collective disappointment arising from the seeming indifference that met previous expressions of concern that compels us now to write this open letter and seek your urgent action on this matter of paramount national interest.

While we support the efforts of the COMELEC to computerize in time for the 2004 elections as mandated by Republic Act No. 8436, we must stress that computerization is not an end in itself, but should be adopted for the purpose of preventing election fraud and ensuring that the will of the people be quickly and accurately determined. Allegations that the bidding process is fraught with irregularities should be taken seriously.

A dismissive response to the issues and the criticisms being raised against the bidding process will not meet the requirements of transparency and sensitivity to public opinion that public servants are duty-bound to maintain. Accordingly we urge the COMELEC to respond to said issues and criticisms with a thorough explanation, and provide reassurance that its computerization project will uphold rather than defeat the will of the people.

Among these issues are the following:

1. **Questions on Eligibility.** The COMELEC has not as yet responded to the issue of strict compliance of the bidders with the eligibility requirements under the RFP.

2. **Failure to Meet Technical Requirements.** Both of the pre-qualified bidders failed to meet the technical requirements in the RFP, including the required accuracy rating (as per COMELEC's technical evaluation report). Why are we paying P1.3 billion for an automated counting system that cannot count accurately?

The COMELEC should explain why they did not declare a failure of the bidding, despite the non-compliance with the technical requirements. It should further explain its express waiver of the technical requirements including that pertaining to accuracy on the ground that they are "mere formalities."

3. **Flaws in the Bidding, Testing and Evaluation Process.** The COMELEC needs to explain the numerous flaws in the bidding, testing and evaluation process, including the inconsistency in the testing procedures, and the opening of financial bids despite non-compliance with technical requirements.

Republic Act No. 8436 authorized the use of an automated election system to the end that the electoral exercise be fast, accurate and reflective of the genuine will of the people. Undue haste in the award of a P1.3 billion contract, notwithstanding serious questions respecting the bidding and evaluation process, for a system that failed the technical requirements set by the COMELEC itself, will do little in inspiring the people's confidence in the efficacy of an automated election system. Accordingly, we urge the COMELEC (1) to review the award of the bid, in coordination with the private sector, and if need be, declare a failure in bidding; and (2) to hold in abeyance any disbursement of any public funds pending a definitive resolution of the issues raised.

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For those who fail to sign up for the early bird rate, an advance registration from June 1 to August 31 is an option. A markdown price of P9,000 (Adboard member), and P10,000 (non-member) will be available. For regular registration on September 1 until October 31, rates are at P10,000 (Adboard member) and P11,000 (non-member) while late registration charges are P11,000 (Adboard member) and P12,000 (non-member). Foreign delegates have a fixed regular registration fee of US $300.

Registration fee covers congress kits, handouts, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, shuttle service to and from congress or meal venues and accredited hotels, or its vicinity, within the duration of the congress proper. Registration fee excludes travel and hotel accommodations.

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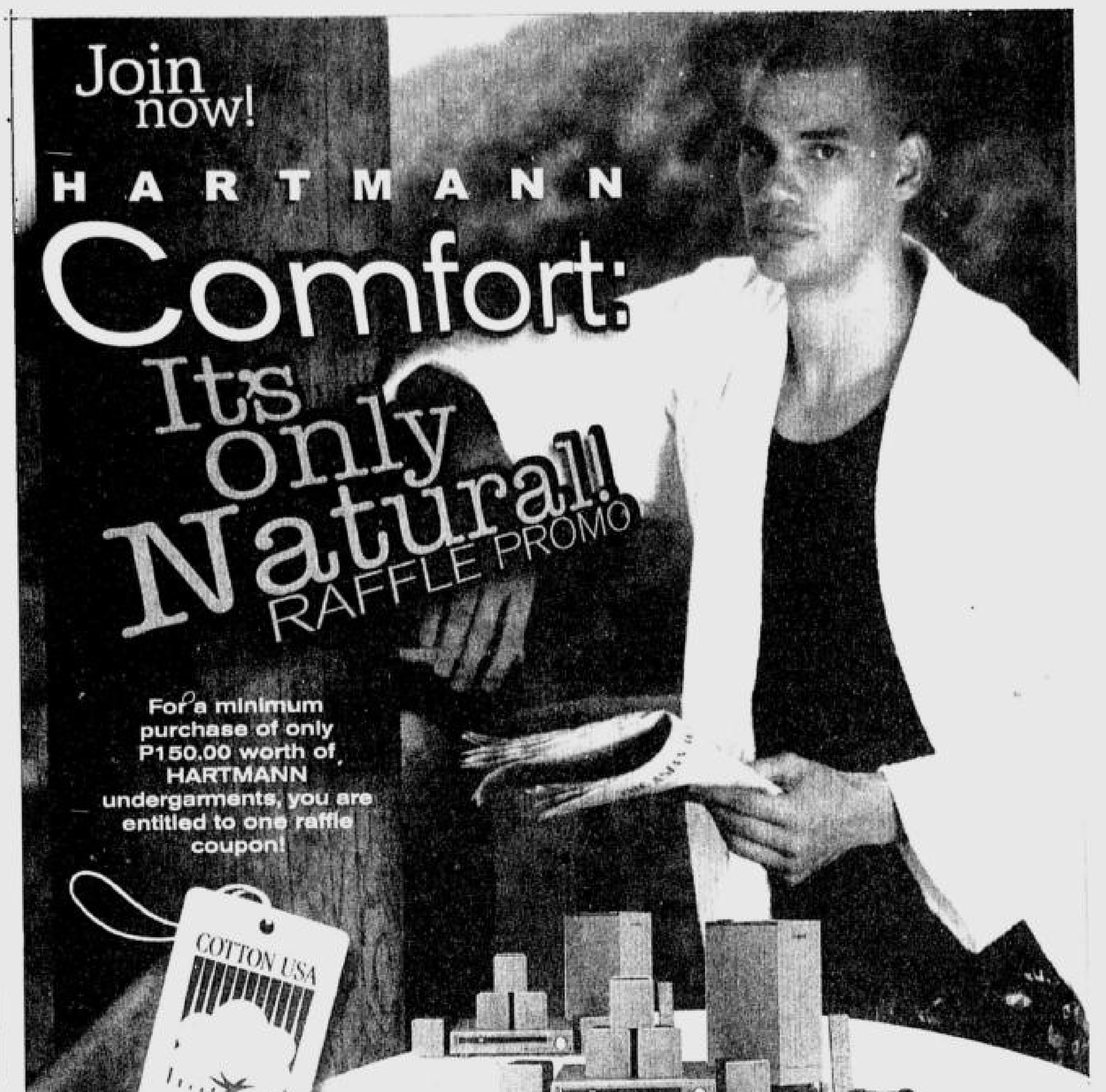

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4. This promo is valid in Greater Manila Area, Central, Northern, and Southern Luzon, Central, Eastern, and Western Visayas from February 28, 2003 to May 18, 2003. Only entries dropped in drop boxes until May 18, 2003 qualifies for the draw. Draw date is on May 31, 2003, 3:00 pm at the SM Megamall Activity Center, Mandaluyong City.
5. A DTI representative wil be invited during the draw.
6. The more entries, the more chances of winning. A customer can win more than once in the raffle.
7. Winners will be notified through registered mail.
8. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash or kind.
9. Winners must present at least 2 (two) valid ID's with registered notice and other half of the coupon when claiming their prize. A representative may be sent, provided he/she brings all the requirements together with valid ID's and an authorization letter from the winner.
10. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from receipt of notice shall be forfeited with prior approval of DTI.
11. GMA winners must claim their prizes at Mansfield International, Inc., 2/F Arete Square, Congressional Ave., Project 8, Quezon City. Prizes of provincial winners will be delivered via courier. Consolation prizes will be delivered to winners.
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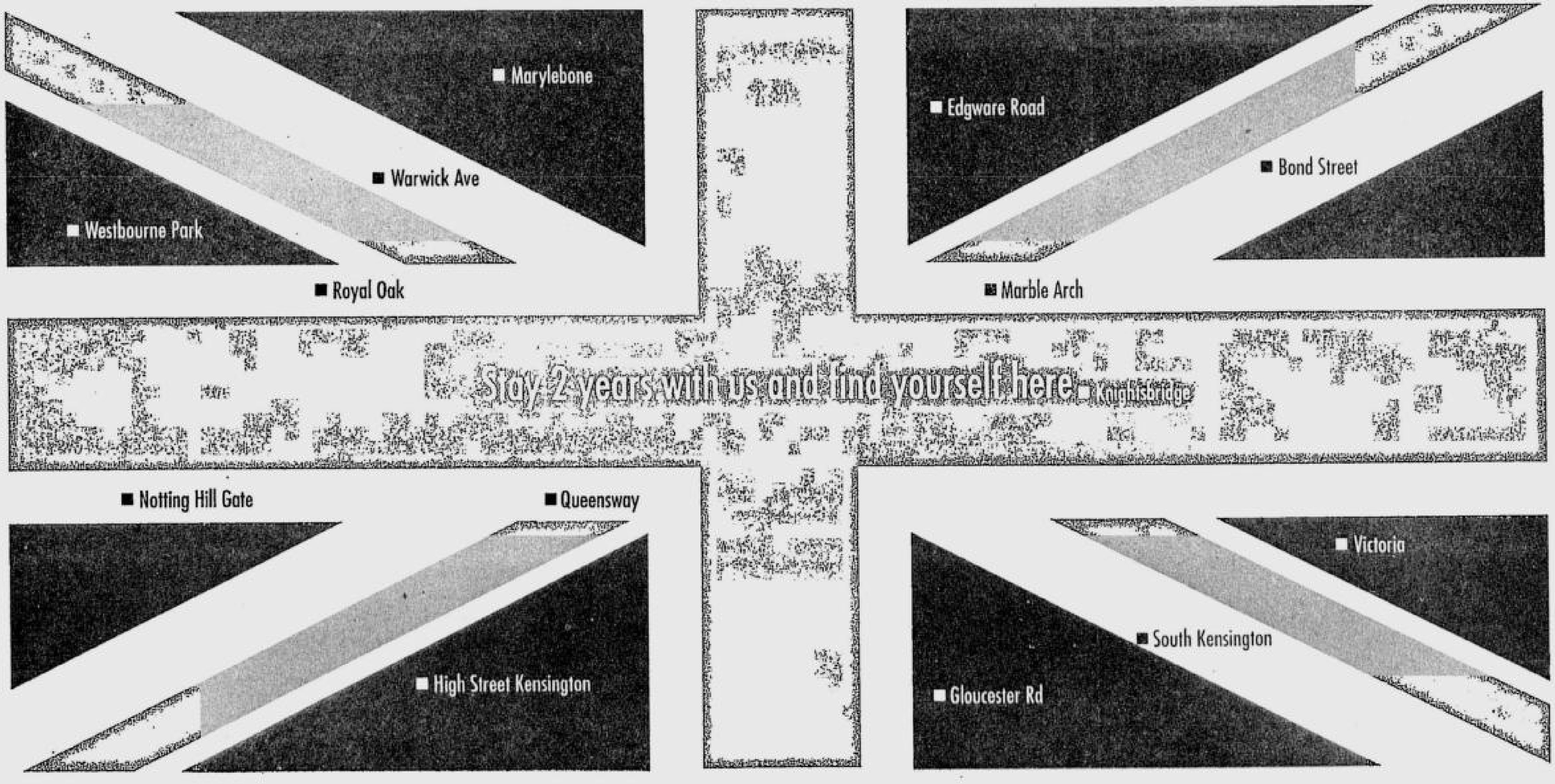

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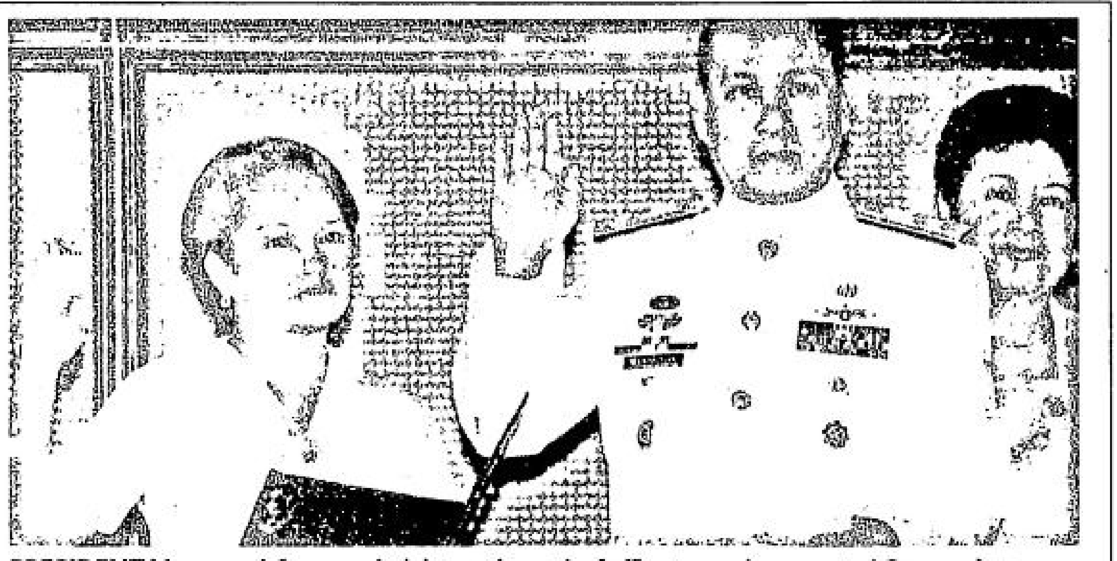

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo administers the oath of office to newly promoted Commodore Franklin Mangonon, as wife Patsy looks on, in Malacañang Palace. He is assistant superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Palace lawyer sues

By Carlito Pablo

THE VILLARAZA and Angangco law office yesterday sued the Daily Tribune newspaper for libel over a series of articles alleging that the firm's managing partner Arthur "Pancho" Villaraza had sought $20 million from a German firm involved in the construction of the Ninoy Aquino International Aiport's Terminal 3.

The newspaper yesterday published the transcript of a purported taped conversation among officials of the German firm Fraport AG and two American lawyers, wherein they talked about Villaraza's asking price of $20 million to solve the legal and political problems of the controversial Naia terminal project.

In his complaint for eight counts of libel filed before the Makati Prosecutor's Office, Villaraza named as sole respondent Tribune publisher and editor in chief Ninez Cacho-Olivares, who wrote the series of articles that appeared from May 7 to 12.

Villaraza noted that the articles were based on "private conversations purportedly made by officers of Fraport and their counsel," which the newspaper itself admitted had been "illegally recorded."

"Clearly, the alleged conversations contained in the alleged tape are not only hearsay statements but also inadmissible as evidence," Villaraza said.

Villaraza said that this should have prompted Olivares to "first ascertain the veracity of the malicious imputations made against me and (the) Villaraza and Angangco" law office before publishing them.

Villaraza did not ask for damages and was clearly seeking a jail term for Olivares.

In its May 14 issue, the Daily Tribune printed in full, with an accompanying article, the transcript of a purported taped conversation among Dietrich Stiller, the Fraport lawyer; Peter Henkel, the head of the Fraport team for the Naia Terminal 3 project; and two unidentified American lawyers.

In the transcript, Stiller related that then presidential adviser Gloria Tan-Climaco told Fraport that it needed "strong litigators," particularly the Villaraza and Angangco law firm.

Gov't told: No need to renegotiate Piatco deal

A CONTRACT that has been declared null and void and called "a testament to greed" should not be re-negotiated by the government, according to the main critic of the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. Inc.

Perfecto Yasay, chair of the Mia-Naia Association of Service Operators (Maso), said there was nothing the government should re-negotiate with Piatco after the Supreme Court ruled illegal its contract to build and operate Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"Renegotiation has been the battle cry of Piatco and now the government is giving it on a silver platter in spite of a damning ruling from the Supreme Court," he said in a press statement. "This is an insult to the High Court and trivializes its findings that crimes had been committed against the Filipino people."

"For the administration to enter into negotiations and an amicable settlement with Piatco after the high court has ruled these contracts to be in violation of public policy and the law is, by itself, grossly anomalous and amounts to a sell-out of the government's paramount interest," Yasay said.

Yasay pressed for an audit of Piatco's books instead of an out-of-court negotiation to determine the "fair and just" amount that Piatco is entitled to.

Museum lecture on betel chewing

BETEL chewing, an old tradition prevalent throughout Southeast Asia as well as India, will be the subject of a lecture by cultural researcher Cynthia Ongpin Valdes at the National Museum at 10 a.m. on May 17.

In the Philippines, the practice has spawned the crafting of various paraphernalia especially among the people of Mindanao. The Maranao, Maguindanao, Bagobo, Tausug and Cotabato are only some of the tribes that have produced interesting betel boxes and other paraphernalia.

A slide show and display of betel boxes will accompany the lecture, part of an ongoing series titled "Of Collectors, Artists, Craftsmen and Objet d'art" jointly sponsored by the Museum Foundation of the Philippines and the National Museum.

Venue is the Museum of the Filipino People (former Finance Bldg.), Agrifina Circle, Rizal Park. Registration starts at 9:30 a.m.

Meralco asked to pay interest

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

CIVIL society and business groups yesterday demanded anew that the Manila Electric Co. immediately refund consumers the overcharges it has been collecting since 1994, and rejected a partial rebate scheme that the electricity distributor was allowed to undertake by government regulators.

The Freedom from Debt Coalition, the Kuryente Alliance and the Kilusan Tungo sa Pambansang Tangkilikan (Katapat), a federation of retailers and service firms, also asked the interest accruing from 1994 to the present be added to the total amount to be refunded.

They estimated that Meralco earned P6.241 billion in interest alone from the overcharges.

The groups opposed the refund scheme approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission in which Meralco proposes to start refunding in June customers consuming up to 100 kilowatt-hours of electricity.

"The ERC-Meralco solution is presumptuous in thinking that the poor are so desperate that they will simply accept an outright cash refund," the groups said in a joint statement.

In a news conference, FDC president Ana Marie Nemenzo said consumers have "actually lost P7.2 billion" because the amount to be refunded to consumers was now worth so much less than when Meralco made the overcharges.

"One peso is not the same as one peso the year before as well as the other years from 1994," Nemenzo said.

She said inflation would have eaten up the "interest-free forced savings" that the overcharges by Meralco amounted to.

"Hence, to simply receive the amount is to incur economic costs or opportunities lost," she said.

The Samahan ng Nagtataguyod ng Agham at Teknolohiya Para sa Sambayanan, a group of scientists, meanwhile urged Meralco refund all residential consumers at once, saying it would only entail about P13 billion.

Erni de Jesus-Maray, Agham spokesperson, said only about P7 billion would be needed to refund residential consumers using up to 300 kWh.

Maray described the Meralco's refund scheme as "overly conservative" as it prioritized only those consuming up to 100 kWh of electricity. He said it was an "insult to the public."

Maray said consumers were also entitled to receive payment of interest on the overcharges accumulated over the nine-year period that the unauthorized rates were being collected.

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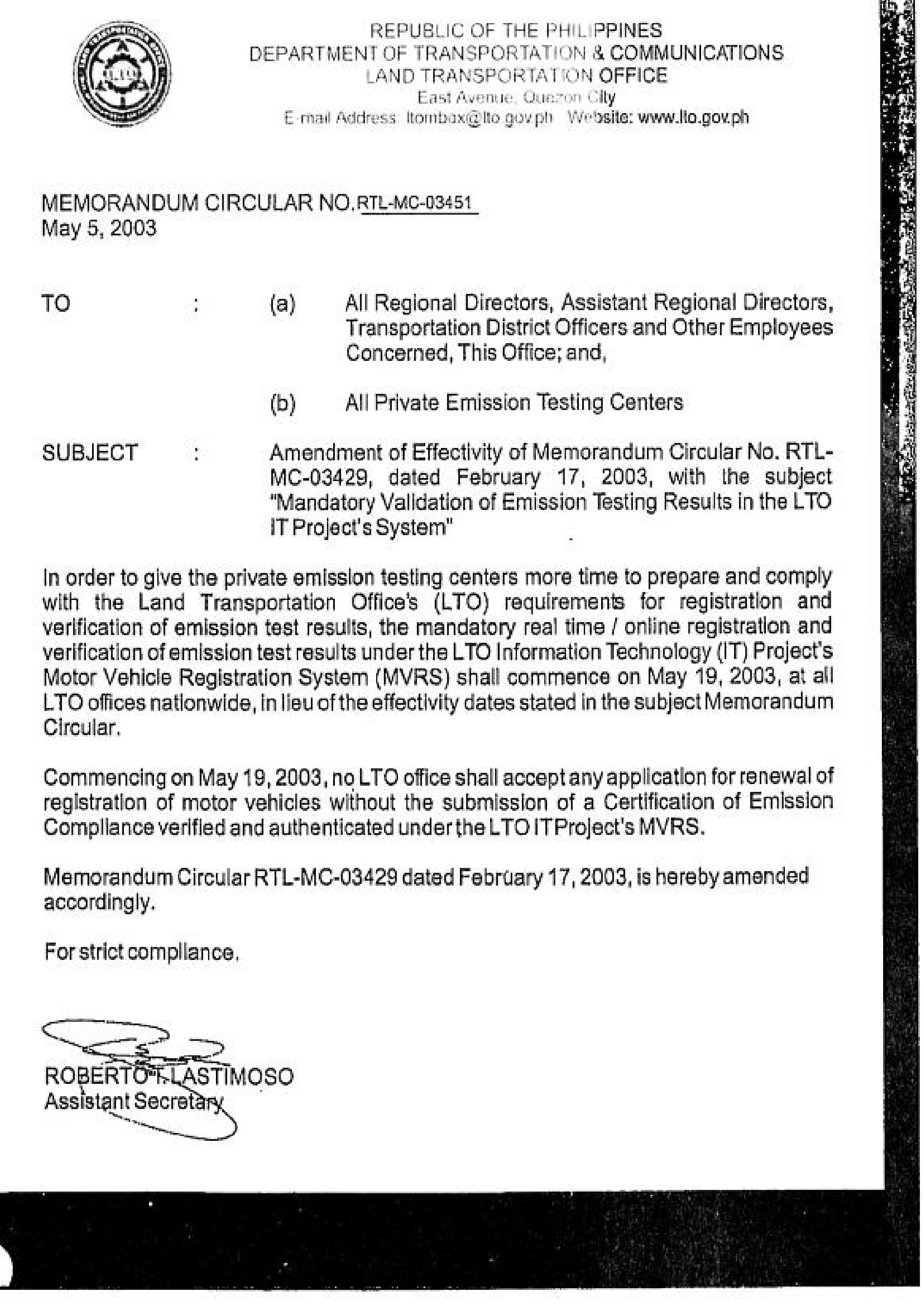

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May 5, 2003

TO : (a) All Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Transportation District Officers and Other Employees Concerned, This Office; and,

(b) All Private Emission Testing Centers

SUBJECT : Amendment of Effectivity of Memorandum Circular No. RTL-MC-03429, dated February 17, 2003, with the subject "Mandatory Validation of Emission Testing Results in the LTO IT Project's System"

In order to give the private emission testing centers more time to prepare and comply with the Land Transportation Office's (LTO) requirements for registration and verification of emission test results, the mandatory real time / online registration and verification of emission test results under the LTO Information Technology (IT) Project's Motor Vehicle Registration System (MVRS) shall commence on May 19, 2003, at all LTO offices nationwide, in lieu of the effectivity dates stated in the subject Memorandum Circular.

Commencing on May 19, 2003, no LTO office shall accept any application for renewal of registration of motor vehicles without the submission of a Certification of Emission Compliance verified and authenticated under the LTO IT Project's MVRS.

Memorandum Circular RTL-MC-03429 dated February 17, 2003, is hereby amended accordingly.

For strict compliance.

ROBERTO T. LASTIMOSO
Assistant Secretary

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Agri chief vows to review Bt corn

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

AGRICULTURE Secretary Luis Lorenzo spent close to an hour talking with four hunger strikers in a cramped tent outside the Department of Agriculture yesterday but emerged with no definite response to the protesters' demand for a moratorium on the sale and planting of the genetically engineered (GE) Bt corn in the country.

"I will still have to review the studies they presented," Lorenzo told the INQUIRER as he emerged from the camp site.

"I have yet to see. This is a process," he said.

During the "dialogue" with hunger strikers Roberto Verzola, Luisita Esmao, Ann Larracas and Fr. Robert Reyes, Lorenzo listened to the arguments of the anti-GMO (genetically modified organisms, such as Bt corn) activists, at times appearing fazed by the technical issues raised by scientists in the group.

The dialogue was arranged by Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao during a meeting with the hunger strikers in Malacañang on Tuesday.

Lorenzo came with a letter addressed to Verzola, the leader of the hunger strikers who have been fasting for 24 days now to demand the moratorium on the commercial use of the Yieldgard Bt corn produced and marketed by the US-based Monsanto. The DA approved the Yieldgard Bt corn in December last year.

Verzola's group immediately called a meeting to discuss their reply to Lorenzo's letter and their actions in the coming days. The hunger strikers had earlier sought an audience with President Macapagal-Arroyo to have a moratorium issued before the President leaves for the US on May 17. They were still meeting as of presstime.

It was the hunger strikers' third dialogue meeting with Lorenzo, but it was the first time that Lorenzo joined them at the camp site. As with the two previous meetings, Verzola and company failed to secure a definite answer from Lorenzo on their demand for a moratorium.

"It's unfortunate that the secretary has been fed with inadequate information," said professor Oscar Zamora of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños, one of the anti-GMO scientists who engaged Lorenzo in the dialogue.

Zamora said the field tests done by Monsanto on the Bt corn in Northern Luzon and Mindanao merely tested the efficacy of the Bt protein against the corn borer. Bt stands for the naturally occurring *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) protein that has been genetically integrated into the Bt corn that makes it high-yielding and pest resistant.

"What Monsanto has not been telling the public and the DA was that the Bt corn's effects on human health and the environment has not been tested and proven to be safe," Zamora said.

Zamora said Lorenzo's advisers have been feeding the secretary with "pro-GMO information."

Lorenzo did not react to the such statements, and merely listened.

Groups opposed to GMOs warn that the corn borer over time would eventually develop a resistance to the Bt protein, while pollen from Bt corn would contaminate local varieties and result in unexpected mutations that could never be reversed.

Agronomy professor Teodoro Mendoza of UPLB warned that the Bt toxin has been tested to bind itself to the mucosal surface of animals' small intestine as shown by laboratory tests on mice.

"This contests the much heralded view that Bt toxin is specifically toxic among *Lepidopteran* pest since the Cry 1 Ab (Bt) protein binds only to specific receptors in the midgut of sensitive insects," Mendoza said, reading from a Bt corn briefer.

Mendoza said it was necessary to perform toxicological tests to demonstrate the safety of Cry proteins for the mucosal tissues and for the immunological system of animals.

Mendoza cited a study which showed that even carabaos and cattle have refused to eat Bt corn due to its high linguin content (33 to 97 percent compared with non-Bt corn). Linguin is relatively indigestible and reduces the ability of herbivores to digest plant material.

Isabela winner proclaimed amid fraud raps

ILAGAN, Isabela—The Commission on Elections on Tuesday night proclaimed lawyer Giorgidi Aggabao of the Nationalist People's Coalition as the winner in Monday's special elections for Isabela's fourth congressional district representative.

Aggabao's victory, though, was tainted with allegations of fraud, such as ballot box switching and ballot tampering, raised by his opponent, Lakas' Dr. Asuncion Abaya, wife of the Isabela Rep. Antonio Abaya.

Lawyer Erwin Valerozo, Isabela election supervisor and chair of the district board of canvassers, proclaimed Aggabao after reading the canvassed official votes at the provincial board session room at the provincial capitol at past 11 p.m. Tuesday.

Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr., a political ally of Aggabao, swore him into office.

The Comelec's official and final count showed Aggabao getting 53,444 votes against Abaya's 41,998 votes.

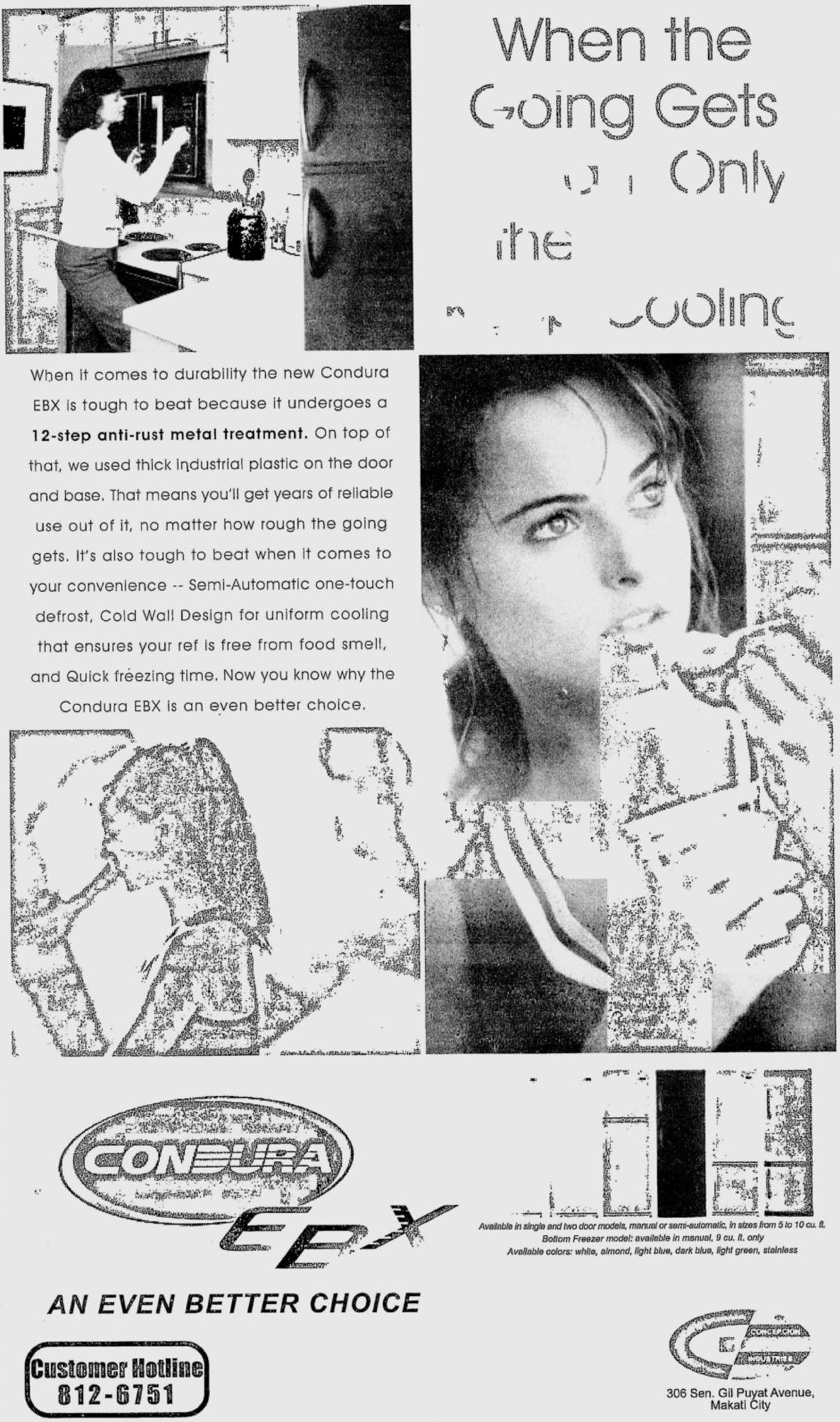
The results showed an 11,446-vote margin from canvassed ballots in Santiago City and the towns of Ramon, Echague, Cordon, San Agustin, San Isidro, Jones and Dinapigue.

But a separate canvass conducted by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, a Comelec-accredited election watchdog, and tabulation results of the Abaya camp showed that Abaya won by at least 4,969 votes over Aggabao.

This prompted Santiago City Mayor Jose "Pempe" Miranda and Isabela Rep. Edwin Uy of the second district to "proclaim" Abaya as the "real winner" in the elections during a "people's proclamation" at the St. James Church in Santiago City.

According to the Abaya camp's tabulation based from the fifth copy of election returns given to them, Abaya got 46,072 votes while Aggabao got 41,103 votes.

But Aggabao downplayed the allegations of election fraud. "When I lost in 1991, I did not complain. I neither whimpered nor complained. When I lost in 2001, did you hear me whimper or complain?" he said.



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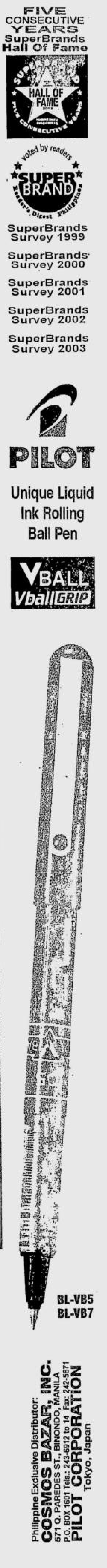

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Still unsafe

EDITORIAL

TERRORISTS attacked on Monday residential compounds housing expatriates in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, killing at least 90 people and wounding about 200 others. Two Filipino workers were among those killed and five others were injured. At least 10 Americans were also among the dead. Arab staff living in the complex were not spared.

The ferocity of the attack was emphasized by three explosions from three suicide car bombs which crashed into the compound. The bombings took place less than a month after President George W. Bush announced that the combat phase of the war against Iraq had ended.

On board the USS Abraham Lincoln on May 2, Bush described the toppling of the regime of Saddam Hussein as "one victory in the war on terror that began on Sept. 11, 2001, and still goes on."

His words proved prophetic. The terrorists are making sure the war goes on.

The attack in Riyadh took place two weeks after the United States announced that it would withdraw most of its troops based in Saudi Arabia in a large-scale redeployment of US forces in the Middle East after the fall of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. It came on the eve of the arrival in Riyadh of US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who said that the bombings had "all the fingerprints" of al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden.

Powell said terrorism "continued to be a threat to the entire world." Bush reacted angrily, saying that the bombings were "despicable acts committed by killers whose only faith is hate," and pledged that "the United States will find the killers, and they will learn the meaning of American justice."

On May 1, the State Department issued a warning that terrorists "may be in the final phases of planning attacks" on American targets in Saudi Arabia, a major staging ground for US forces in the invasion of Iraq.

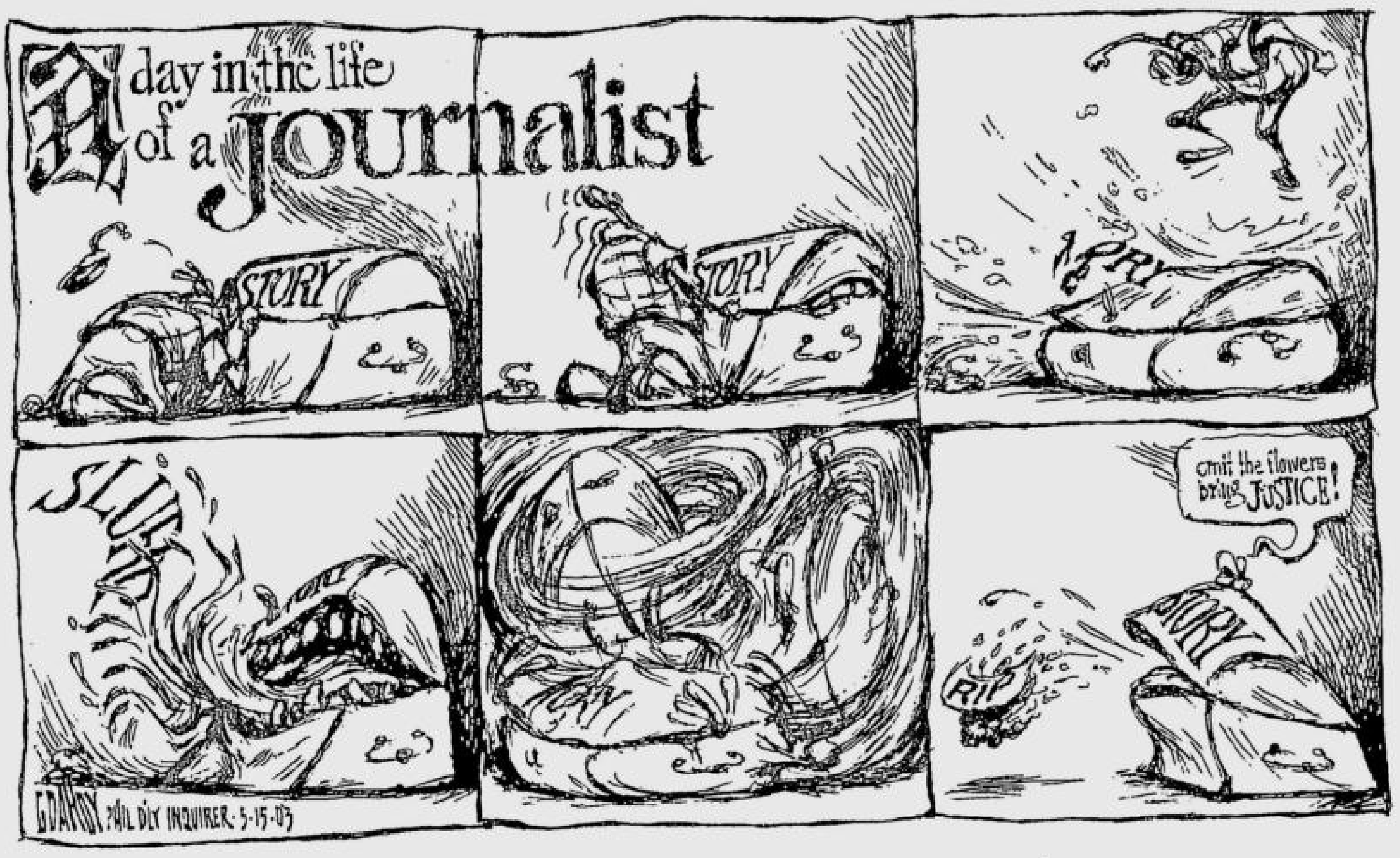
The bombings in Riyadh may well be the opening salvo of the counter-attacks of al-Qaida to remind the world that it is not yet a spent force. Moreover, they tend to show the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan and of the Saddam regime in Iraq has not made the world safe from terrorist attacks.

One of the important justifications for the invasion by the US-led coalition of Afghanistan, followed by that of Iraq, was meant to topple regimes that were identified as either giving sanctuary to terrorists or aiding them with weapons of mass destruction. The bombings in Riyadh prove that terrorists are able to stage attacks even if their supposed "host" regimes had been toppled. These attacks undermine "regime change" as a rationale in pursuing the war on terrorism.

The attacks also serve as a warning that countries which aided the United States in the war against Iraq are possible targets be they on their territories or their nationals working on construction or reconstruction projects in the Middle East. This risk should not be taken lightly by Filipino construction workers, about 70,000 of whom are now working in Saudi Arabia, with several thousands more likely to be recruited by American construction companies for the reconstruction of Iraq.

What is starting to unfold is that regime change and occupation of territories of "rogue states" cannot stop terrorist attacks. What the war against Iraq has demonstrated is that the United States has the military might to annihilate armies with superior technology, engage in lightning wars (Iraq collapsed in 26 days), remake the balance of power in the strategic Middle East, and wage war even without the help of its major Western allies in Europe. What this engagement of power failed to do is capture or kill Bin Laden and Saddam and his senior accomplices. It has not brought the United States nearer to its goal of finding weapons of mass destruction, which was the rationale it used to invade Iraq without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council.

In the effort to combat the revived terrorist attacks, Bush's problem is whom to attack next. The attacks are a feeble justification to attack either Syria or Iran. In fighting terrorists, the United States can rely less on massive deployment of military power, as invasions require huge logistical and forces mobilization. It will depend more on focused intelligence. This form of warfare in the shadows is what we can expect even as the United States will be required to occupy Iraq longer than Washington had expected it.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Administration cheating Palawan in gas project

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

HERE'S a warning to President Macapagal-Arroyo who is visiting many provinces (to court votes for 2004?) when she is not traveling abroad: Don't go to Palawan. No, it's not because of terrorists or kidnappers. It is because the Palaweños have saved from the logger's axe the tallest trees in Palawan's forests.

What's that got to do with a presidential visit?

Those trees have been reserved as the hanging trees for the President and Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

Why do the Palaweños want to hang the President and Camacho?

Because they are trying to cheat the Palaweños out of their just share of the proceeds from the offshore gas project at Camago-Malampaya.

Palawan's share from the projected proceeds has been estimated at $2.1 billion dollars over 20 years, according to Administrative Order No. 381 issued by President Fidel V. Ramos in February 1998.

The Constitution, the Local Government Code (LGC) and Republic Act 7611 all support Palawan's claim of a share from natural wealth found within its boundaries. Article X, Section 74 of the Constitution provides that a local government unit (LGU) is entitled to an equitable share in the proceeds of natural wealth found within its territory. The LGC reinforces this provision and provides the computation of the share and how it is to be divided among the municipalities and the barangays.

RA 7611 signed by President Corazon C. Aquino on June 19, 1992 sets the territorial boundaries of Palawan, which puts the Camago-Malampaya gas project within the jurisdiction of the province. From 1992 to 1996, the national government gave Palawan its rightful share from the oil explorations near Camago-Malampaya.

When President Macapagal visited Palawan on June 18, 2001, she said: "Palawan is lucky because of its natural gas project, making it one of the richest provinces in the Philippines."

But now that the national government is short of cash, has a big and growing budget deficit, and its finance secretary doesn't know where to get more funds, the President has changed her tune. In a speech during the inauguration of the Camago-Malampaya Natural Gas Project in Tabangon, Batangas on Oct. 16, 2001, she contradicted her previous statement by saying the Malampaya project is "off Palawan" and describing it as "nearest to Palawan."

The Cabinet member who planted that idea in her mind, Camacho, who is the official responsible for producing funds for the national treasury, now say Palawan is not entitled to any share from the proceeds of the gas project since it is 80 kilometers from Palawan whereas the territorial jurisdiction of municipalities is only 15 km.

Wrong. The Kalayaan Island group, more than 100 km from the Palawan mainland, is part of the province. The Camago-Malampaya project is between Kalayaan and the mainland and therefore inside the province's territorial jurisdiction. Besides, the territorial jurisdiction of Palawan is graphically plotted by RA 7611, otherwise known as the Strategis Environment Plan for Palawan. That "territorial jurisdiction" of a province contemplates not only its land area but also its marine areas is evident in the inclusion of "fishery charges" in the enumeration of fees and taxes under Section 290 of the LGC.

The multi-billion gas project is operated by Shell Philippines Exploration B.V. Containing huge gas deposits, it is considered the single biggest investment in the country today. Based on the LGC, Palawan as the host province is entitled to 40 percent of the proceeds from the project. Natural gas from the project is now being used in electric generating plants in Quezon and Batangas. Palawan was supposed to receive its share from the initial revenues in the first week of April. "But we have not received anything in spite of our demand letter to the Department of Energy," said Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes.

For more than a year, Palawan negotiated with the national government to settle the controversy. To avoid a court litigation that could prevent the national government from using the gas revenues, the administration offered a financial aid package to the province equivalent to 20 percent of the government's earnings. But after a series of discussions on the content of the memorandum of agreement between the two parties, the provincial government presented another draft MOA. However, the national government rejected the second draft MOA written by the national panel.

Realizing that the negotiations have reached a deadlock, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan authorized Reyes to institute legal proceedings against the national government. Last May 7, the provincial government filed a petition for declaratory relief before the regional trial court of Puerto Princesa.

The petition asked the court to declare that "territorial jurisdiction" includes marine areas as contemplated in Section 290 of the LGC, and that the Camago-Malampaya area is therefore within the territorial jurisdiction of Palawan, pursuant to the provisions of RA 7611, Provincial Ordinance 674, Series of 2000, and allied laws. Consequently, it asked the court to declare the rights of the Province of Palawan to receive its full 40 percent share of the proceeds of the national wealth, especially the natural gas project, in accordance to the provisions of the Constitution.

Class acts

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WANTED to write about this last week, but got waylaid by other things. Well, better late than never.

One was the induction of Efren "Bata" Reyes to the Hall of Fame of the Billiard Congress of America. It's an honor richly deserved. Bata is probably the Julius Erving of billiards, the one person who gave the game class and flair. Like "Dr. J," Bata would not always win championships, and he would see others attain even higher levels of skill and creativity. But he was the one who started it all, who showed the moves, who unraveled dimensions to the game few people thought possible. He was the one who, over the last 20 years, defined how the game was to be played.

He has been called "The Magician," and it is an apt name. The shots he has produced on the pool table seem to defy the laws of the material world. But it is not the tricks he has pulled that has catapulted him to the ranks of the greats of the game. It is the limpidity, or clarity, or simplicity of his game. Somehow, as one announcer put it, he always manages to put his cue ball right where he wants it, in preparation for his next shot—give or take a fumble or two. That is the real magic of it, his ability to make things look so effortless. Why make things hard for yourself when you don't have to?

The ultimate trick he pulls is that of tricking us to thinking we could do it too. Which, of course, we can't.

The other story was that of John Stockton saying goodbye to the game he loves. For those who do not watch the NBA, Stockton was the point guard who, in tandem with Karl Malone, brought the Utah Jazz to several trips to the finals over the years. He announced his retirement soon after Utah lost in the first round of the playoffs to Sacramento. The papers reported that he made his decision with as much lack of fanfare as he played basketball. To the end, he was never one to call attention to himself. While he played he always credited the other guys for the success of his team. He still did, when the praise started coming his way. And it came like a flood.

David Stern, the NBA commissioner, who like many others, at first refused to believe Stockton was leaving when he had just finished a productive season despite being 41, said: "It has been a pleasure watching John play all these years. He defines so many aspects of how the game should be played that it almost becomes cliché-ish. Passing, shooting, team work—and anything else that has to do with winning."

Dallas assistant coach Derek Harper said: "If there's one guy who knew what it meant to be a point guard, it was John. He knew how to play the position and he didn't do it with speed and quickness. He did it with his mind."

New Orleans Hornets' assistant coach Brian Hill said, "He should leave the building and walk right into the Hall of Fame."

But it was probably Dallas coach Don Nelson who articulated the feelings of most fans when he said: "John is one of those guys who keep his mouth shut and plays. He's one of the all-time great guys and great players."

That's what pushes the two stories beyond the sports pages into, well, life itself. It's nice to know that in a world that has been laying out the welcome mat to huge egos, loudness and hype, there are still people who are the opposite: the nice guys. And who are proving to that world that contrary to its wisdom, nice guys don't have to finish last. That is what Bata and Stockton have in common: they're quiet, unassuming guys who have taken hold of their world and shaken it by its roots. I'm one of those standing up to applaud.

Sports in particular have been exceptionally hospitable to brashness, self-advertisement and trash talk. Which has taken extreme forms in the World Wrestling Federation, which for some reason seems to have developed a following here. You cannot have anything louder and more outsized than it, though I grant it makes for a perverse drollness too. Basketball itself is home to that loudness and outsizedness. Yao Ming's transition from Chinese basketball to the American one was not easy, the least of his problems being language and skills. The first was attitude. His coach and his teammates couldn't understand why he never developed a dunking prowess with his height, until he explained that in China it was not considered polite to show up an opponent by dunking on him!

Of course, much of the loudness and trash talk in the NBA has to do with blacks making a statement to a hostile world, forcing it to sit up and listen. Muhammad Ali was probably the loudest self-advertiser of all, being responsible for the ultimate self-advertiser's rant or cant, "I am the greatest." But Ali wasn't just making a point, he was doing it wittily. He had a gift of gab, for one who could barely read and write. He spouted poetry as much with his mouth as with his fists.

Unfortunately, not everybody does, which often makes the brashness grating. That's what makes you grateful for a Bata Reyes and a John Stockton. Their accomplishments are all the greater for their having gone against the grain. They gave sports a timely reminder of what class is all about.

I like in particular what one of our stories said about Bata. What's not to like about him? To top it all he smiles a lot, especially with his eyes. I agree completely. His eyes, where laughter truly resides, do smile a lot. They hold a vast sense of amusement, even while gazing at their owner's own foibles. And, well, they hold a vast sense of joy, too.

In the end, it's not about the adulation, or the money, or the competition. It's about the exultation one feels at being able to do what one does best.

It's what separates genius from mere talent.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com

Senators shouldn't be afraid of Cha-cha floor debate

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

YESTERDAY a large group of civil society leaders, members of the House of Representatives led by Speaker Jose de Venecia and Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez, and heads of local government leagues signed what they called a "Social Contract for Constitutional Reform." They pledged to work for three specific amendments to the Constitution: a shift from a presidential/bicameral system to a parliamentary/unicameral form of government; move from a unitary to a federal system within six years and not later than 2010; and amend some economic provisions to enable our country to become more competitive with other economies. The social contract called on Congress to "rise to its duty" and convene posthaste as a constituent assembly (Consa).

* * *

There were no senators present, an indication doubtless of the deep division in that chamber over the issue. But significantly, local officials came in in full force: the president of the 79-member League of Governors, Davao Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario; the president of the 1,495-strong League of Municipal Mayors, Ramon Guico of Binalonan, Pangasinan; the president of the 114-member League of City Mayors, Francis Tolentino of Tagaytay. Many mayors such as those of Angeles, Iriga, Maasin and Calapan were also present. The League of Barangays, 42,000 strong, was also represented, and as De Venecia pointed out, at its recent convention in Cebu, 93 percent of its members voted in favor of Consa. The different league presidents want a meaningful local autonomy which they believe can only be derived from a shift to parliamentary/federal system via Consa. JDV noted that these officials represented an overwhelming majority of civil government all over the country.

In addition, JDV spoke about strong support from the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, represented by Alberto Fenix; the Management Association of the Philippines, represented by Ed Ferreira; and the Filipino-Chinese Chamber represented by Robin Sy and Francis Chua. Support is particularly strong in Mindanao which is batting for autonomy from "Imperial Manila."

* * *

Given this support from local officials, it is no wonder that Consa has backing from the grass roots. De Venecia spoke of a recent survey conducted by Trends, the polling firm subcontracted by both SWS and Pulse Asia, showing more than 50 percent acceptance by the people. The problem, however, is that despite all the grass-roots support, the Senate is divided and pro-Consa advocates led by Sen. Edgardo Angara appear to be short of the 12 votes needed to pass the resolution he co-authored with Sen. Robert Barbers.

Cebu Rep. Clavel Asas-Martinez told this columnist yesterday, "At the grassroots Consa has no problem; it is the senators that are the only stumbling block to Charter change." The problem, she stressed, is that the senators batting for a constitutional convention may in reality be against change, since they know it's hard to effect change once a new term has begun (there's talk of a convention's work taking effect only in 2010). The Speaker put it differently: "Maybe the senators favoring a convention should tell the people the truth—that they want it only in 2010."

Given the overwhelming majority of local officials supporting a Consa, it would appear that the senators are the ones "isolated" from reality, and not its proponents in the House. The senators are convinced about the need to amend the Constitution, but they are divided over the method: whether through a Consa or a convention. The question is, why don't the senators put this issue to a full-blown debate on the floor by allowing the committee on constitutional amendments and electoral reforms to report it out to the plenary? This needs eight committee votes, but no one knows whether Angara's committee has them at this point.

* * *

What are the senators afraid of? A full-blown debate on the floor will ventilate all the issues, and the superiority of one idea over the other should prevail. That is what democracy is all about, a free market of ideas. All that the citizens ask is for the Senate to allow the Angara committee report to be heard in plenary. If at the end the pro-Consa senators fail to muster the needed 12 votes to pass the Consa resolution, then that's it. But at least this crucial issue was put to a debate.

* * *

Sadly, what's happening now is that some senators opposed to Consa are resorting to what Lakas-NUCD ideologue Amado Luis Lagdameo called "ad hominem arguments." Meaning, personal attacks focused largely on De Venecia, instead of debating the merits of each method. A vicious vilification campaign carried out in the media portrays JDV as aiming to come to the highest office through the back door via the parliamentary shift, since he could not get through the front door in the 1998 presidential election. At yesterday's launch of the social contract, an emotional JDV cried foul, as he pointed out that he has been espousing a shift to a parliamentary system for the last 15 years as secretary general of the Association of Parliamentarians. Besides, he has repeatedly disavowed any intention of running for president again or interest in being prime minister.

For an issue that Senate President Franklin Drilon has described as "dead on arrival" at the Senate, Charter change through Consa appears very much alive, though attempts are being made to derail it at the committee level. The challenge to the senators is to exorcise the monster of fear and put this issue to a full debate. As lead convenor Marietta Primicias-Goco put it, "We can build on our hopes, not on our fears."

Village life

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

DRIVE through the environs of Bel-Air Village in Makati these days, and you'll notice the village gates transformed into the façades of Spanish-era churches. The displays are all by way of creating the proper mindset for the celebration of "Pasinaya 2003," the Bel-Air fiesta, from May 23 to 25.

The "Women of Bel-Air," a gathering of residents that is about a year old, says that this year's "Pasinaya" aims to evoke the wonders of a Philippines of bygone eras, when most Filipinos were born, lived and died in small villages or in distinct neighborhoods "where everyone knew everyone else." To this end, the ladies and whatever willing husbands or male neighbors they have managed to round up, have organized a welter of activities designed to foster the spirit of neighborliness, a sense of "goodwill and belonging" that they feel has been lost in urban settings.

"We are lucky that in Bel-Air we have at least a semblance of community life," says Susan Calo-Medina, one of Bel-Air's "leading ladies."

"We live happily together," avers Barangay Chair Nena Lichauco, who, so her friends tease her, "eats, sleeps and breathes Bel-Air."

This year's fiesta should strengthen those neighborly bonds even more. "Where before our barangay and homeowner association officials would mount shows to mark Christmas or the fiesta," notes Calo-Medina, "this year we decided we didn't want to just be watching passively. We said that we ourselves should be involved in putting up our entertainment, and in the months of rehearsals and preparations, we have found ourselves getting to know each other better."

* * *

ABOUT 100 to 120 residents of Bel-Air are involved in one way or the other in the "*velada*" or public presentation that will be the highlight of the fiesta. Young female residents have been inveigled into participating in the Santacruzan, which Calo-Medina and her friends stress will be mounted along traditional lines, with authentic Biblical, liturgical and historical characters. Couples will be performing traditional Filipino dances from all over the regions, with the Ramon Obusan troupe as backup dancers and choreographers.

The household help and grounds and security staff will not be left out, either. A special dance night and program have been designated for them, though I would think the homeowners risk being shown up by their *kasambahay* on how to really have fun at a fiesta!

In addition to the dancing and performing, the Bel-Air women are also preparing a regional food fair, with restaurants famous for regional specialties participating, including Everybody's Café for Pampango food, and Kamalig for down-home Bulakeño fare.

* * *

ALL expenses for the fiesta are being shouldered by the barangay, since Bel-Air, it turns out, is the richest barangay in the country. An irony, certainly, for Bel-Air folk describe themselves as "proudly middle-class." "The people who live in Forbes Park are the country's wealthiest residents," says Lichauco. "But Bel-Air has a bigger IRA."

The secret of Bel-Air's wealth lies in the fact that about 30 years ago, the homeowners, the real estate developer (Ayala) and commercial developers reached an agreement after an acrimonious lawsuit that reached all the way to the Supreme Court allowing a controlled development of lots along Jupiter Street. It's these business establishments, as well as all those in the village's perimeter, that now contribute heavily to the barangay's coffers. Lichauco, though, is quick to add that Bel-Air shares the bounty with other barangays in Makati which often come to her for help.

It's nice to know, too, that despite the income it generates, the barangay's officials feel the need to go beyond the physical aspects of development, and are pursuing the development of Bel-Air as a community and, cliché as it sounds, a family.

Already, the Women of Bel-Air, which counts 133 members, is preparing for the village's 50th anniversary in 2007, which they will mark with the publication of the "Bel-Air Community Cookbook," a collection of treasured recipes from the kitchens of the neighborhood, a neighborhood that feels like home.

* * *

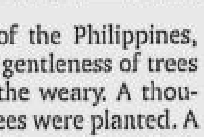
IN CONTRAST to the efforts of Chair Lichauco and the Women of Bel-Air to build a spirit of neighborliness in their village, in Negros Occidental, the president of the homeowners' association of Town and Country, a subdivision on the outskirts of Bacolod, is rapidly alienating her constituents. And what makes the official's high-handed actions all the more galling, says a disgruntled resident, is that she doesn't even live in the village!

You may remember Ric and EJ Ramos, whom I wrote about almost a year ago for their brave decision to relocate their young family to the Greater Bacolod area. So far, says Ric, they have little reason to regret their decision. The children are flourishing in the fresh air (no SARS scare there) and the friendliness of the people. In three months' time, his children had already acquired the charming Ilonggo lilt and could speak the language like natives.

But Ric and EJ made the mistake of questioning the "draconian" policies of the association president, Irene M. Kramer, and the anomalies that attended her "election" and continued occupation of her post. As a result, the Ramoses have had their water supply cut off despite the fact that they have been faithfully paying their water bills and now fear being barred from entering their home with the revocation of their car stickers. Ric says he is talking to a lawyer, but he regrets that their otherwise idyllic life in Negros should be marred by such disputes.

Remembering the pain (1)

HUMAN FACE



Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WHEN all the images have blurred with time, the sound of words muted in the memory and the events of a dreadful past become like whirling sand in a distant land, there is one thing that remains in the soul's terrain and cannot be willed away. It is the remembrance of the pain.

Forgiveness frees, justice heals many wounds, reconciliation erases failures and doubts. But pain remains. The sting of the past is present.

This much is true especially in the case of the thousands of victims of the dreadful, insane purges in the Communist Party of the Philippines that saw comrades killing comrades, comrades suspecting comrades, comrades betraying comrades. Nothing compares with the pain of those who survived with hideous scars on their skin and souls, who saw friends killing friends and dragging them to be slowly slaughtered.

How did it come to this? You dedicated your youth and the promise it held, you gave your all, your soul, your entire being to a vision, a dream, a movement that for you was the embodiment of all your hopes and worthy of all your energies, talents and entire future. Then one day you found yourself declared unworthy, a traitor, a betrayer, worthy to be cast away and dumped into a pit.

But first, you were tortured, made to beg and taste pain in its most unbearable form, and worst of all, forced to admit, with blood in your mouth, to a grave crime—that of being an enemy, a complete falsehood. How could a community of comrades you had loved with all your might, with whom you dreamed dreams and fought countless battles turn against you?

It is pain without a name, without sense, without relief even when it is over.

Last Saturday, May 10, anniversary of the betrayal and death of the great Filipino hero Andres Bonifacio, surviving victims, families of the missing dead, as well as someone who admitted to having had a say in the killings (and later also became a purge victim herself) came together to remember and honor the memory of those who died in the "killing fields." The venue was Freedom Park at the University of the Philippines, close to the lagoon where the gentleness of trees and water provides relief to the weary. A thousand candles were lit. Eight trees were planted. A marker—a chunk of a boulder—was unveiled. The words inscribed on the metal plate said:

"*Paggunita sa mga buhay na walang-katarungang pinagmalupitan at sinawi ng mga kampanyang anti-militarisasyon sa loob ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas noong dekada otsenta (1982-89), Oplan Cadena de Amor, Kampanyang Ahos, Oplan Missing Link, Operasyon Olympia, Operasyon Takipsilim, atbp.) sa mga pinaghinalaang ahenteng militar; upang sila'y hindi malimutan at ang mga karahasang yaon ay kapulutan ng aral' sa pagtataguyod ng dignidad at karapatang pantao, at upang hindi na maulit pa sa ngalan ng rebolusyon o panlipunang pagbabago. —Marso 10, 2003, sa buwang paggunita sa araw ng kamatayan ni Andres Bonifacio sa kamay din ng mga kasamahan noon 1897.*"

Weep. "*May lambong na luksa ang Buntis*"—a shroud of mourning covered Mount Buntis. This was how it was in 1897 when Bonifacio was killed. This was how it was last Saturday afternoon. The sky, with its lowering clouds set the mood: "*Kayong nalagasan ng bunga't bulaklak…*" From pain flowed poetry and song.

If reading Robert Garcia's blood-curdling, first-person account in his book "To Suffer Thy Comrades" (an Anvil bestseller) crushed my heart, listening to survivors and a repentant party official made my soul tremble and want to dig into that pain. How deep, how raw.

The gathering was not an occasion for recrimination, blame-throwing and crying vengeance. It was a time to remember, to weep, yes, but now in the warm arms of fellow comrades and friends. It was a time to give the pain a name.

"*Gusto kong magtuwid,*" said the repentant woman who had presided over killings in Mindanao. She wanted to make things right. How? she sobbed. Her pain will remain till the end of her days. A victim of Operasyon Takipsilim recalled how the native mortar and pestle used for pounding rice was used as an instrument of torture on him. *Halo* became *pamalo*.

Lani Mercado-Carreon, abducted on Nov. 9, 1988, wanted it known "that evil had been committed against us." She had been told that after all these years she "was still angry." "Me angry?" she retorted rhetorically while the audience wiped their eyes. Soothing words from one walking wounded: "*May tatamis pa ba sa pagpapatawad?*"

The dark side to a revolution, said UP president Francisco Nemenzo, we are here to deplore and we hope to delete. He cited the aftermath of the French Revolution, and the Russian, Chinese, Cambodian and Philippine cases. Cruelty is not necessarily inherent in revolutions, he assured.

He was going to be a purge victim himself 30 years ago, Nemenzo revealed, because his group was going to break away. There was a tendency, he said, to regard as renegades those who held contrary views. Luckily the military caught up with him and he "was brought safely to prison."

What did party bosses say of the senseless butchering at that time? One survivor quoted the official line: "Quite successful although there were excesses."

Successful? No official apology until now. Humbly I plead, I ask, is it so difficult?

I was never near being a member of the communist movement despite what my military tormentors thought. I couldn't have been. But I was in awe of the dedication of so many lowly cadres I had met, of those who spent their lives among the poorest and died unknown and unsung.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Wisdom finds me

YOUNG BLOOD

Natalia Estrada Pineda

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I FEEL the soft wind on my face as I push on the pedals. It's been 10 years since I last rode a bike. The last time being with my younger sister and my father, a big man with the largest arms and the loudest laugh and undoubtedly my No. 1 fan.

Saturdays used to be the best day of the week. The dreariness of everyday grade-school life disappeared as soon as he woke us up early. It took me a month to learn to ride a BMX, but it was worth all the scrapes on my knee and the wounds on my ego.

Yes, my dad pushed me to take risks, to grab the handles and maneuver my way to stay clear of the curbs and reach the end of the road. He knew exactly when to let go. He believed I could when I thought otherwise. He believed in his baby girl when no one else did. And that made me think I could conquer the world.

He also made me think all men were smart, sunny and beautiful—until he left me and our family. It was not his decision. Fate took him just before I graduated from grade school.

I don't know why it took me 10 years to write this. Call it the debut of wisdom. Ten years is a fairly long time to realize the wisdom of things. And then there's the magic of the unknown: why things have to happen and why at a specific, unexpected time.

My best guy friend says wisdom isn't about learning new things but finding meaning in familiar events that happen again and again. Papa's passing might have shook my family so much that I had to grow up very fast to cope with everything happening around me. If my mother hadn't been strong and my family hadn't been bound by love and faith, I doubt if my siblings and I could have reached this far.

In high school, I began to realize that my dad wasn't the only member of the opposite sex. Later on I thought college would make up for the absence of sensible men in high school.

But six years after I entered college, I have yet to meet the ultimate manifestation of the male species. Oh, I've met a few good men, but most of them were still fed on high chairs or were hung up on their cars. The exceptional ones, like the best parking spaces, are taken.

Why the bitterness? No specific explanation, but I've deduced some things in the last few months.

Soon after my father passed on to a better life, circumstances have led me to become closer to my maternal grandparents. My Papa Lolo and Mama Lola became wonderful sources of laughter, information and wisdom. They were an inspiration to me in many ways, and I tried to relish every moment I had with them. I remember telling Lolo that I loved him for being my father for the last 10 years.

My Lolo and Lola lovingly look at each other and smile and cry a little when they remember my father. Sometimes, seeing how much Lolo loves Lola gives me hope that there is a man who just might be the light switch in my otherwise dreary love life. Forty-nine years of honest, unadulterated, selfless love. In an increasingly sinful world, just how many people have known this kind of love?

Sometimes I wondered if they still kissed each other. I got my answer when during a visit, I saw them lying next to each other, my Lolo's arms around my Lola's waist, peacefully sleeping on a warm, lazy afternoon. I thought that was the best example of love my grandparents ever showed me. Until June of 2002.

My Lolo had been showing signs of a stroke. But weak as he was, I saw strength in his eyes and even more love for Lola as she helped him to eat and dress up each morning. There were funny moments when my Lola would sneak some sweets to Lolo when he complained about the staleness of his meals. We would reprimand both of them, but they would just smile and Lolo would hurriedly gulp down a glass of Coke before I could take it away. My Lolo was always the jolly one.

Yup, he also believed in me. I distinctly remember what he told me the day I took the board exams: "God will always be with you."

That was the last time I ever heard his voice. Four days after the exams, on my mom's birthday, we were devastated when he was rushed to the hospital. He had another stroke.

The next morning, my uncles announced, like it was nothing out of the ordinary, that I had passed the exams.

I jumped and rushed to my Lolo and began kissing him and telling him that his first grandchild was now a professional. I asked him if he was proud of me. The look in his eyes and a faint nod confirmed it.

For several months, my uncles, aunt and mother showed their love the best way they knew how. My uncles woke up early in the morning or stayed up throughout the night to give him food via a tube that went straight from his nose to his stomach. Lolo never liked semi-solid food, so I understood why he tried to remove the tube when everybody else was asleep. We'd laugh it off, me and Lolo, but my Lola would repeatedly "reprimand" us. But in the wee hours of the morning, I would see my Lola caressing his face and hands. Two bodies with one soul.

I often questioned my faith especially last December as I saw the mirth slowly vanishing from my Lolo's eyes. As I cared for patients with the same fate during daytime, I refused to see what was slowly taking my Lolo away from me. But when I did, I saw how one's suffering was made lighter when two people carried it on their shoulders. My grandparents had reached that point in their lives when they carried their last cross together. And they did.

Two weeks before Christmas, my Lolo quietly slipped away. As I wailed and promised to be the best granddaughter he wanted me to become, my Lola wept silently. She had so much grace, so much strength, so much sorrow.

In my two decades of existence, I have lost two wonderful men.

This leads me to the question about why I feel bitter about men. Every time I felt I was falling in love, I'd step back and retreat to my shell and fortify its defenses. I deftly build a concrete wall to prevent the world from knowing that behind it is a soldier who is too afraid to use up her ammunition.

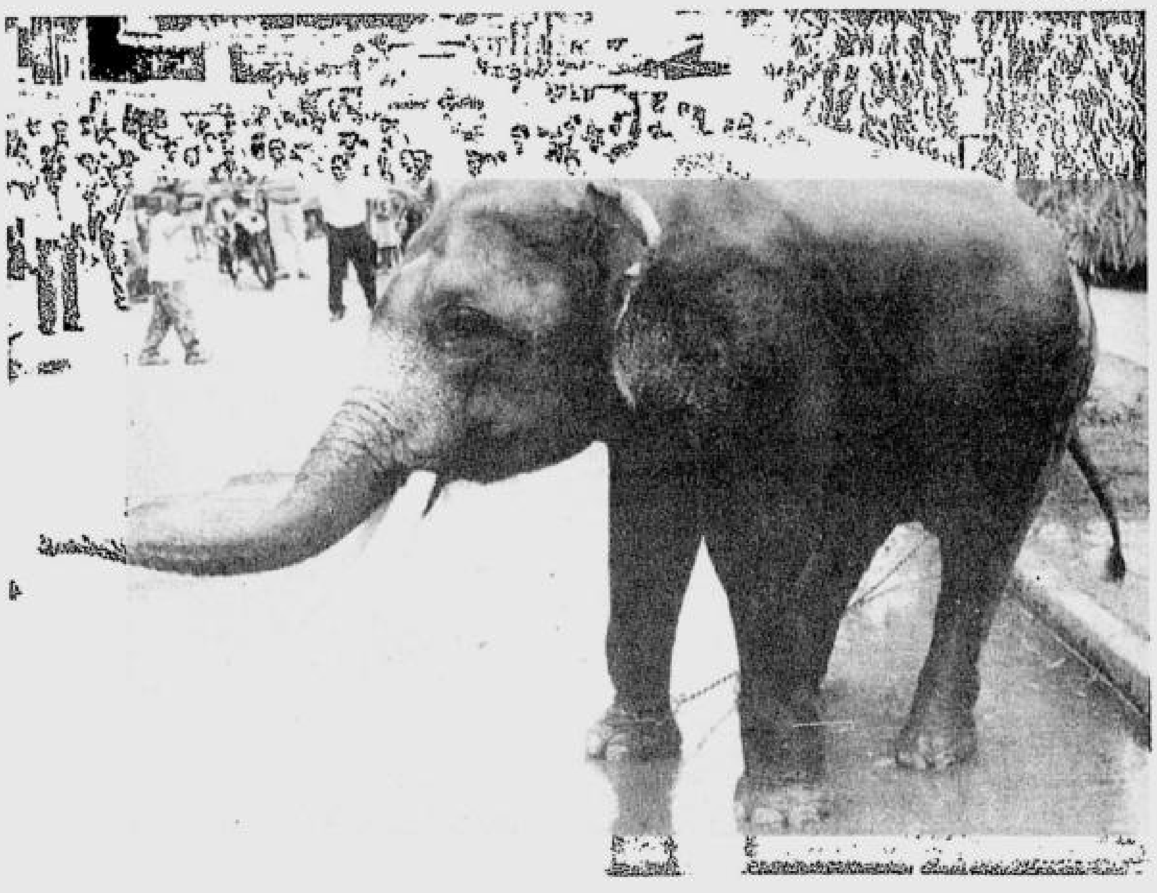
Five months ago I felt I was falling for an interesting man. I thought. When he began reciprocating (or so I assumed), I began reinforcing that wall. I cannot say if it was me or if there was something about this person that kept me from showing him my affection. I guess it's not just him that I long to understand but the infinite and cyclic occurrences that keep me waiting, anxious and hopeful. I wait (hopefully not in vain) for a word, a deed that will provide an explanation for the past five months of enthusiasm.

The sad feelings caused by what I have lost in the past 10 years keep me from jumping into the unknown. If I do decide to take that leap, will I find wonder, an aura of light, a myriad of colors or another winding and never-ending path?

It is late. I slowly pedal my way back to the grumpy man who rents out the BMX. The wind blows on my face and I feel my hair on my bare back. I look up and observe that stars have taken their positions for lovers to look at. Will I ever find the answer to my question? Have faith, I tell myself. And there I draw some fresh strength.

Natalia Estrada Pineda, 22, is an occupational therapist working at the Philippine General Hospital.

When elephants run amok



"WE were thrilled. It was the first time we ever saw a live elephant."

This was the general reaction of people who witnessed the elephant Jumbo being retrieved after he had escaped from his holding pen at the Araneta Coliseum. The operation became a show in itself, complete with action, comedy, drama and an unseen tragedy. For nothing is more tragic than an elephant in a circus.

Confined to a circus, the elephant suffers physically and psychologically as it is separated from its herd and made to do "tricks"—unnatural behaviors that are stressful for the animal.

In the wild, elephants live in close-knit families that stay together until they die. Elephant herds can travel as far as 25 miles a day. "Circus elephants" are denied almost everything important to them, including family relationships, privacy, mental stimulation, physical exercise and emotional outlets.

The horror show the viewing public does not get to see is how these intelligent, majestic animals are captured from the wild and made to submit to their trainers. Part of the training process include: water and food deprivation, solitary confinement in very small and cramped spaces, restraints on the animals' legs such that they are unable to even make one step forward or backward. Often, elephants need to be beaten into submission.

When the strain of captivity becomes too much, elephants often snap and run amok, causing property damage, injuries and even human deaths. Since 1990, 65 people have been killed in elephant rampages and 130 people have been injured. A tragic example of an elephant rampage occurred in 1994, when a female circus elephant named Tyke killed her trainer and ran terrified in the streets of Honolulu, Hawaii. Unable to control her, the Honolulu police had to kill Tyke with 100 bullet rounds. Sadly, this incident has been repeated in several elephant rampages all over the world.

As the incidence of circus elephants running amok are on the rise, people are beginning to take notice of the abuse circus animals are being subjected to, including tigers, bears and primates.

This has led to the launching of an international campaign to ban animals in circuses, and the movement is growing worldwide. Several cities, states and locales in the United States, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Finland, Columbia, Greece, Singapore, Israel and Sweden have banned animals in circuses. Likewise, the list of animal-free circuses is growing.

The elephant's road to freedom is still long. Yet it would help to hear what it is really trying to say to us the next time it runs amok.

—TRIXIE CONCEPCION,
national coordinator,
Earth Island Institute
(Philippines),
132B Matahimik St.,
UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City

Where's Imelda's 'ancestral home'?

THE ROMUALDEZ siblings, Imelda and Alfredo, must have been misquoted in two successive news items datelined Tacloban City last May 8 and 9. Imelda was quoted as saying, "This (Olot estate) was ours long before Marcos was born and became President." Then Alfredo reiterated that Olot was "the ancestral property of the Romualdezes."

In a way, the Romualdezes were our neighbors in Tacloban (or at least Imelda's aunt who was a doctor) and in San Roque, Tolosa (or at least their tenants looking after their kenaf plantation). But I don't recall Imelda and Alfredo having a house in San Roque or in Tacloban.

Until Ferdinand Marcos became president, the small community of fisherfolk in Olot lived cheek-by-jowl with a modest bungalow owned by Eduardo Romualdez, who became finance secretary. This cabana had command of a short span of white beach directly fronting it. With its unlocked gate and sagging hogwire fence, fisherfolks and picnickers were free to come and go and enjoy the sea, and even use the showers as though it were a public beach. For us Tolosanos, Eduarding was a gracious host.

Speaker Daniel Z. Romualdez built his own beach house next to Eduardo's, one that was more imposing. But the hogwire fence remained unrepaired.

He also donated a huge image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was installed at the Balawarte on top of Mt. Inapusong. It became a favorite pilgrimage site for visitors, who trekked to Mt. Inapusong to enjoy the view, savor the fresh mountain air, and venerate the Sacred Heart.

When Ferdinand and Imelda came to power, those free things nature provided were lost. Olot is now a 45-hectare property fenced off from end to end. Jesus continues to watch over Tolosa, even while Tolosanos can no longer venerate Him up close.

Tolosa, a small and sleepy town, has reared some illustrious statesmen, mainly from the Romualdez family. The late Justice Norberto Romualdez Sr., while not born in the town, loved Tolosa even more than those who were. He composed our "Himno Han San Miguel," immortalizing our devotion to our patron saint. There was also the late Speaker, Danieling, a man about whom I have yet to hear one negative comment. And there was Leyte Gov. Norberto Romualdez Jr. They were all men of integrity, and going by the standards they set for themselves and their clan, I could not imagine Imelda making those inaccurate claims.

Of course, the remains of her father and her unborn child are in a plot in Tolosa, beside the school in the town proper. Of course, Kalipayan Beach House was a storybook castle which up to now remains fenced-off from the rest of rural Tolosa. Of course, Olot was the ancestral home of some 50 families who were relocated across the national highway so they wouldn't remain inside the Kalipayan perimeter fence and now they have to walk all the way to Barrio Bislig to get to the sea and earn their livelihood.

—BUTCH L. JUNIA,
2207 Cityland 10 Tower 1,
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Firms should make paper 'banderitas'

THROUGH this letter, we hope to reach all the companies, which manufacture and sell consumer goods.

May is a time for fiestas and in every district and town one can see *banderitas*. Invariably, these are donated by companies and used by them as vehicles for advertising and promoting products.

Unfortunately, these *banderitas* are usually made of plastic which are not biodegradable and many times they remain on the streets and are left to the elements until they are tattered and torn.

Companies, which earn their profits from a country, should help to protect that country's environment and they should act responsibility like good citizens.

While it is beneficial to tourism and to our soul as a people to preserve our fiesta traditions, we should do so without destroying nature. Paper *banderitas* are colorful and can be recycled. Why not donate these instead?

—R.A. RAYMUNDO,
451 Pedro Gil St., Ermita, Manila

Compassion for SARS victims

OF course we are not racist when it comes to world health matters like SARS. But the column of Raul J. Palabrica last Apri 27, "Sobering effects of SARS crisis," provided me some points to ponder.

He wrote: "Had the SARS contagion happened two decades ago, medical experts in Western countries would have had a field day flogging the underdeveloped countries... For Hong Kong and Singapore, which have to date 105 and 14 SARS-related deaths, respectively, the epidemic has become a humbling experience... They have flaunted their wealth and financial superiority over their less economically developed neighbors. The condescending attitude subliminally shows..."

One thought that a word of compassion for those dying in neighboring countries would have been appropriate, but we read on and found: "After SARS, Hong Kong and Singapore will not be the same again. Hopefully, they will have learned important lessons in humility. Nobody lives in ivory towers forever..."

So, let us work together lest we die together in a pandemic of pain.

—ANTONIO S. CRUZ,
L.V. Locsin Bldg.,
Makati and Ayala Avenues,
Makati City

Tan has no interest in Terminal 3

CONTRARY to the claims of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan in her column last May 8, Lucio C. Tan never spoke to Cheng Yong of the Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco), nor did he ever make the statement that Cheng would never be able to operate Naia Terminal 3.

For the record, we would like to stress that Tan, either personally or through any of his companies and business associates, has no interest whatsoever in taking over or operating that terminal.

We hope this will finally put the matter to rest.

—LT. GEN. SALVADOR M. MISON
(Ret.), president,
Basic Holdings Corp.,
7/F Allied Bank Center,
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Cover-up on SARS and AIDS

THOSE filthy, stinking, mentally deficient Chinese!

I refer not to my good Chinese friends in Manila and Hong Kong but to some deadly doctors in China, the Beijing mayor and health department director, who covered up SARS cases in China and so infected many in the world. Victims are dying daily and the Philippines is about to be hit despite prayer power claims. Officials in China told lies, covered up and hid SARS cases from the World Health Organization (WHO) like a very similar cover-up in Manila on HIV-AIDS.

One brave doctor in China, Dr. Jiang Yanyong, has revealed more cases that the government has hidden. He should get a WHO award, and I'll send money for a new SARS clinic if the Chinese Embassy gives me details.

But what should be the penalty for the Chinese death dealers? "Infect them with SARS," one Chinese suggested in Makati. I am with the Pope on the death penalty—we are against it. But I'll make an exception for the mass killers in China.

But what about the cover-up in Manila on HIV-AIDS?

—EARL WILKINSON,
Makati City 1226

Exposing marine predators

BEING a former spearfisher, I am very glad to read that "poachers" in Apo Reef were caught in flagrante delicto.

Congratulations to all those in the Ocean Explorer and the INQUIRER for exposing these predators.

—RAMON S. SUTER, M.D.,
522 Talisay St., Ayala Alabang
Village, Muntinlupa City

DENR issued no new orders on Alcantara land leases

THIS is to clarify any misconception arising from the letter to the editor of Eddie Tamondong. ("All is well that ends well," PDI, 5/3/03) His letter said that I "finally cancelled Nicasio Alcantara's Forest Land Grazing Lease Agreement No. 542 covering 923 hectares of land belonging to the B'laans in General Santos City, as ordered by former Secretary Heherson Alvarez pursuant to a final and executory judgment of the Supreme Court."

We wish to inform INQUIRER readers that we did not issue any other order with respect to FLGLA No. 542 or to FLGLA No. 552 (the one issued in favor of Felicisimo Alcantara). The press statement we released was merely a reiteration that, as far as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is concerned, the two grazing lease agreements remain cancelled. Our records indicate that the latest DENR decisions with regard to the agreements were the cancellation orders issued by Alvarez dated Aug. 15, 2002 and Nov. 21, 2002 for FLGLA No. 542, and Dec. 3, 2002 for FLGLA No. 552.

Our records do not indicate any incidents on the matter that are currently pending before the DENR. The Alcantaras chose to contest the cancellation orders before the Court of Appeals.

Nonetheless, we are coordinating with the agencies concerned, such as the city government of General Santos, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples and the claimants so that proper action on the declaration and delineation of ancestral claims are made. We have entered an agreement with them with respect to making perimeter surveys, protecting the area from non-indigenous claimants, and proper identification of claimants. This is all in keeping with my Jan. 8, 2003 instructions to ensure the orderly implementation of the cancellation orders.

—ELISEA G. GOZUN,
secretary, Department of
Environment and Natural
Resources, Visayas Avenue,
Diliman, Quezon City

Smaller mission to Iraq is best

CAN we not take the middle ground on the issue of humanitarian mission to Iraq? Instead of arguing whether to send our troops for humanitarian reasons or for economic and security reasons, we should find a way to settle the matter in a manner that is beneficial to our country and helpful to the Iraqi people as well as in accordance with international conventions.

There is no dilemma. The administration can push the plan through but only by addressing the valid concerns raised by the critics. The 1994 Geneva Convention and UN resolution providing for international assistance to war-torn countries can be pursued only by a small contingent on our part (not 500 members) at less cost (not P600 million which we will be hard put to raise).

Downsizing the contingent will mean additional "peace-keepers" in Mindanao. Lessening the cost will mean not depriving our people of the money that could be used, more importantly, for their education, housing, health, etc. or, the money could be used for anti-criminality, anti-terrorism, anti-SARS and anti-poverty programs.

Also, the risks could be lessened. We should first wait for the volatile situation in Iraq to stabilize before our troops are commissioned. Further, operating guidelines or the rules of engagement should be clearly spelled out.

—DODO RA. CAGAS,
3rd Estrada St., Digos City,
Davao del Sur

Epidemics past and future (2)

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I HADN'T realized last Tuesday was the 100th death anniversary of Apolinario Mabini, and that he was a victim of one of the many cholera epidemics that afflicted the Philippines.

Whether local or global, these epidemics are indeed Grim Reapers, with very high death tolls. In the late 18th century, some 400,000 Europeans were dying each year from smallpox. History books tell us, too, that while the rich tended to have better survival chances during these epidemics, they were not totally safe, with emperors and popes among the victims.

Epidemics often lead to irrational social responses. We see the current panic over SARS, with religious zealots warning that the end of the world is near and calling on people to return to religion, preferably of course the ones they preach.

Sometimes, plagues led people to turn from old religions to new ones. During the Plague of Cyprian in Rome from 251 to 270, an epidemic that probably involved measles and smallpox, there were mass conversions to Christianity. Similarly during a smallpox epidemic in Japan in the 8th century, people turned to Buddhism.

In some cases, religious fervor complicated the control of disease. During the cholera epidemic in the Philippines that killed Mabini, public health authorities found their hands full as Filipinos turned to drinking "holy water" from Manila Bay. The water turned out to be contaminated and helped spread the disease through several parts of Manila.

Epidemics also triggered off scapegoating and xenophobia or a fear of foreigners. In the 15th century when syphilis spread through Europe, the Italians called it the Spanish disease or the French disease. The French called it the Italian disease, while it was the Polish disease for the Russians. The Arabs, well, they called it the Christian disease.

In many cases, the conspiracy theories, scapegoating and xenophobia that accompanied epidemics were intentionally instigated. Anti-Semitism, always strong in Europe, took a violent turn during the bubonic plague in the Middle Ages, with Jews being blamed for the epidemic, and massacred.

In the SARS outbreak, we see how mass media have contributed to fear and panic. I asked older people if they remember what it was like during the flu pandemics of 1957-1958 and 1968-1969, which killed thousands of people. None of them could even remember there was an epidemic. Mass media were more limited in their scope then: television was still fairly new and there was no CNN, no Internet, no cell phones and texting. Today, all these new forms of media feed into each other, amplifying people's anxieties and instantly spreading rumors and misconceptions.

Amid all the fear and despair that epidemics create, history tells us that these epidemics also showed how humans could rise above adversity. Rather than accept the epidemics with fatalism, there were men and women who often risked their own lives to probe into the causes and look for solutions.

There is the famous story about the 19th century microbiologist Robert Koch, who had to convince a cynical medical establishment that cholera was caused by germs in drinking water. To prove this, he drank water with the cholera bacteria. Many doctors remained unconvinced because Koch only got mild diarrhea from the drink.

The control of epidemics depends less on medicines than on the coordinated work of huge public health teams, including epidemiologists who trace the spread of diseases, health educators giving out correct information and a host of other workers, not necessarily from the health sector. Much too little has been said, for example, of the role our airport quarantine personnel have played in keeping SARS out of the Philippines.

SARS has revived the language and imagery of war, with descriptions of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals as frontline soldiers. In the current SARS outbreak, we have the example of the World Health Organization's Dr. Carlo Urbani, who recognized the grave threat posed by a new disease when he was called in by a hospital in Hanoi to treat patients with "atypical pneumonia." He alerted the WHO to this new disease even as he worked with Vietnamese doctors to find ways to control the disease. In the end, he himself died from SARS.

May 13th isn't just the death anniversary of Mabini, it is also International Nurses' Day, a day to reflect on how, among the frontline workers, it is nurses who face the greatest hardships and risks. Last week in Hong Kong, nurse Lau Wing Kai, who died while caring for patients with SARS, was given a hero's burial in Gallant Gardens, a cemetery usually reserved for exemplary public servants.

And while we fret about globalization as a factor in spreading disease, we forget that globalization too has been tapped in the battle against diseases and epidemics. The same mass media that sometimes cause panic have also been helpful in alerting health authorities to new disease outbreaks, and in educating the public on prevention measures.

History shows us globalization is not new in the fight against disease. On Nov. 30, 1803, the ship Maria Pita left Spain with a "vaccination expedition" that had been constituted by a royal order from Charles IV of Spain. On board were two medics, Francisco Xavier Balmis and Jose Salvary Lleopart, as well as 21 children from orphanages, who were to be living vessels for a crude form of smallpox vaccine. The expedition vaccinated thousands of people in central and south America, and eventually the Philippines and China.

Epidemics spark not just fear and despair but hope and courage. I couldn't agree more with what Prof. Felipe Miranda wrote in a recent column in the Philippine Star:

"SARS eventually will be checked, as the black plague, the Spanish flu, cholera, smallpox and malaria were. In all of these cases, functional science, community understanding, uncompromising and timely collective action—perhaps also some prayers—jointly worked to neutralize formidable threats to our species."

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

A MILITARY honor guard marches before the review by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao with visiting Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase outside of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing May 14. China yesterday reported five new SARS deaths and 55 new cases. AP

New outbreaks of SARS feared in Taiwan, S'pore

SINGAPORE—Singapore reported a possible outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome at its biggest mental hospital and Taiwan said the disease had spread to the island's south, dashing hopes that the deadly virus was slowly coming under control.

China, the world's worst affected country, yesterday reported five new SARS deaths and 55 new cases, the health ministry said.

The new deaths take the nationwide death toll to 267 and the cumulative number of cases to 5,124.

All the latest fatalities were in Beijing.

China redoubled efforts to stamp out the widely prevalent practice of public spitting as a means to control SARS.

The disease, for which there is no known cure, is spread mainly by droplets. Over 7,500 people in 30 countries have been infected so far and almost 600 have died.

Researchers in Germany said however that they had found a weakness in the virus and that a drug being tested against the common cold could be modified to battle SARS.

Such a drug could be designed in a matter of months, they said.

Governments around the world have been battling to stem the spread of SARS, isolating those infected, confining anyone believed to have been exposed to the virus in mass quarantines and implementing stringent checks at air and sea ports.

Those moves appear to have worked in Vietnam, which the World Health Organization declared SARS-free last month after five deaths there. Singapore, with some of the world's strictest measures in place against SARS, looked to be headed in the same direction.

But late on Tuesday, the government said 24 patients and three nurses at the Institute of Mental Health had been isolated with possible SARS and three other nurses had been quarantined.

It was unclear how the mentally ill patients might have contracted SARS. Most were more than 60 years old and suffering from chronic mental ailments, health officials said.

Singapore had gone 15 days without a new infection—five days short of the WHO's target for being taken off a list of SARS-affected regions that also includes China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Toronto.

"The cases have to be assumed to be due to SARS until proven otherwise," said Bey Mui Leng, a Ministry of Health spokesperson.

Singapore had quarantined more than 3,000 people at home, temporarily shut all schools and barred visitors at hospitals while introducing widespread temperature checks at border checkpoints to stem the nine-week epidemic. *Reuters, AFP*

Chinese turn to potions, sorcerers to fight SARS

BEIJING—Hiring sorcerers. Lighting firecrackers. Following advice reputed to be from a mystical talking baby. While China's government promotes science, thousands of its people are turning to the supernatural to fight SARS.

The resort to tradition has prompted efforts by China's state press and the officially atheist communist government to discourage it.

But multiple reports of what Chinese leaders consider dangerous superstition in widely scattered areas illustrate the scale of fear of a disease the Health Ministry said Tuesday has killed at least 262 people on China's mainland. More than 5,000 have been infected.

In the central province of Hunan, villagers hoping to avoid Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome seek help from sorcerers in incense-infused rites, according to local officials and newspapers.

Scores of believers gather at temples or the sorcerer's home, kneeling in prayer before lighted incense and candles. Some burn fake money as an offering to the gods.

He Dazhi, a reporter for the newspaper Sanxiang Metropolitan News, wrote that believers are asked to bow to spiritual scrolls or a statue of Buddha. Gongs or drums occasionally accompany the ceremony.

"SARS is completely unknown to many farmers," he wrote. "Their fear of infection has been used by sorcerers to have them rely on superstition instead of science."

On Tuesday, World Health Organization investigators who visited northern Hebei province said migrant workers had carried the virus to rural areas from neighboring Beijing.

The announcement confirmed worries that SARS, still largely an urban disease in China, might spread to the countryside. Experts say a lack of doctors and hospitals there could make any outbreak a catastrophe.

Hebei has reported 191 cases and eight deaths, though the WHO experts did not say how many were in rural areas.

In Beijing, state media said quarantines on three hospitals and a residential neighborhood have been lifted, though a WHO specialist said it was too early to say the peak of the capital's epidemic was past.

"It is quite possible that in another week we'll see an upsurge in cases, if there are undetected clusters or outbreaks occurring," said Dr. Keiji Fukuda.

Gao Binzhong, a professor of folklore study at Peking University, said the popularity of magic in response to SARS in China's vast countryside, and some cities, is natural.

"People not only need a medical explanation, but also a cultural and psychological explanation," Gao said. "It is understandable that people with various backgrounds explain the uncertainty in their own way." *AP*

PNB

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 27, 2003 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2002 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on June 25, 2002
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2002
5. Approval of the 2002 Annual Report
6. Ratification of All Acts and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2002 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
7. Election of Directors
8. Appointment of External Auditor
9. Other Matters
10. Adjournment

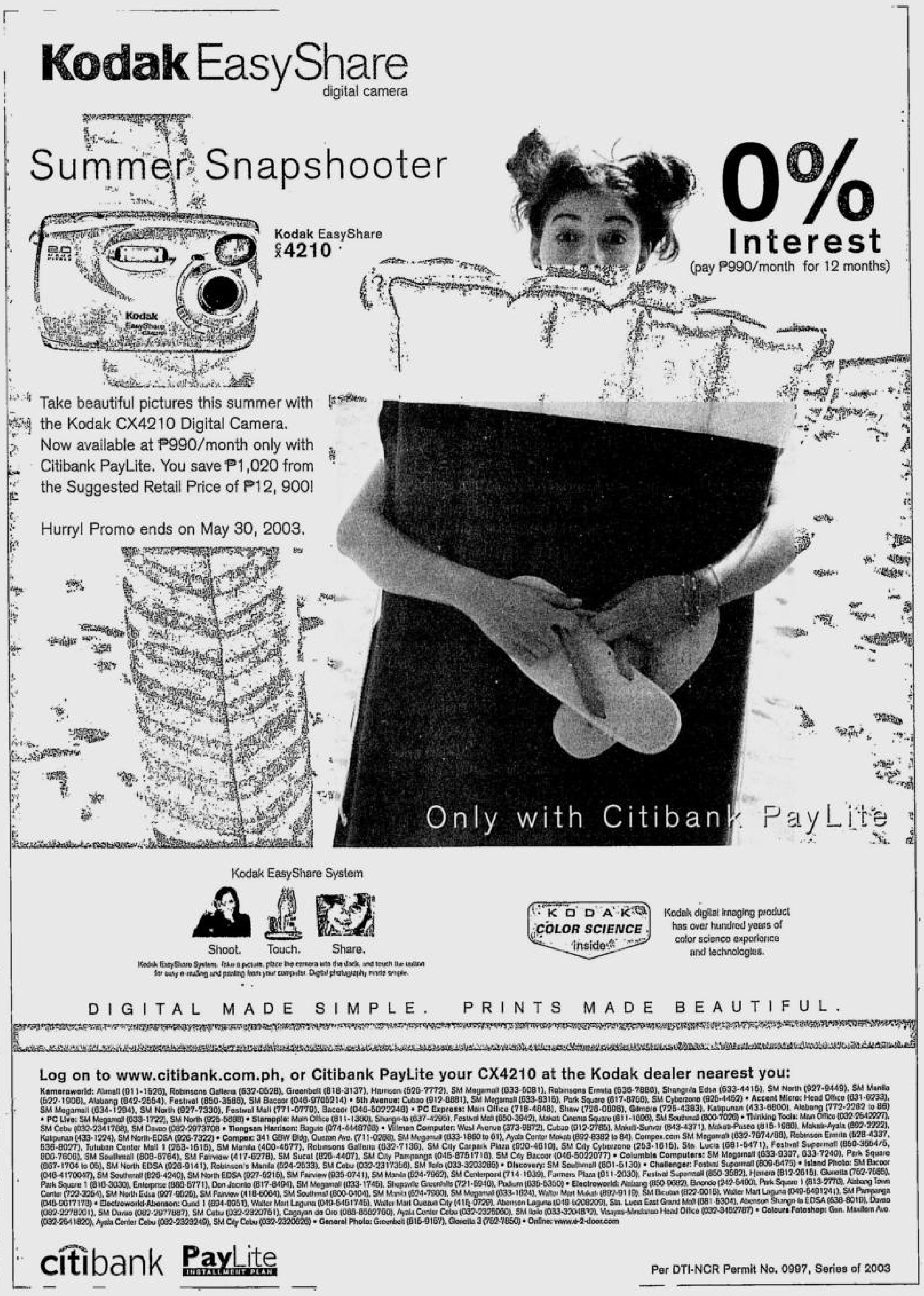
Minutes of the 2002 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from June 26, 2002 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 28, 2003 will be entitled to vote at this meeting.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 22, 2003. A Proxy shall conform with the requirements of Sec. 58 of the Corporation Code, and shall be affixed with a duly paid documentary stamp tax in accordance of Sec. 192 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997.

Pasay City, March 21, 2003

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary



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2,200 bodies exhumed from Iraq mass grave

HILLAH, Iraq—Teams excavating a mass grave in central Iraq have exhumed more than 2,200 bodies of people they suspect died during the Shiite revolt against Saddam Hussein's government in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, officials said Wednesday.

By every indication, it was the largest mass grave found in Iraq since US forces overthrew Saddam's government last month.

Hundreds of people from nearby towns and villages watched from behind a barbed wire barrier as sets of remains were pulled out from the field and set aside wrapped in plastic bags, sheets and blankets. Some of the bodies' skulls still had tufts of long hair, and officials said they probably were women.

Many of the onlookers were weeping, and some chanted: "There is no God but God, and the Baath (Party) is the enemy of God." Several women were holding pictures of the missing men.

In the past nine days, people have dug up 1,500 sets of unidentified remains, said Ameer Shumri, an official from the governor's office in Hillah, 100 km south of Baghdad. He was supervising the operation.

Another 719 exhumed bodies have been identified mainly through identification documents found on the remains, he said.

Villagers from the nearby town of Mahawee first organized the dig by bringing in a bulldozer to open up the site.

"We are organizing it and we are digging," said Abuzaid Dinar, the village headman. He said his dead father and brother were buried somewhere in the area, where several separate mass graves were spread out over an area of approximately one square kilometer.

"About 20 percent of them were buried alive, because they had no bullet wounds, but their hands were tied and they were blindfolded," Shumri said.

Shiites rose up against Saddam after the 1991 Gulf War but were crushed by the Iraqi leader and his ruling Baath Party police and military apparatus. Thousands of Shiites were killed.

Many Shiites had expected more US help in their revolt. Some have expressed bitterness, saying the United States under former President George H.W. Bush—the current American president's father—had not intervened to save them from Saddam's wrath.

Sukna al-Jbouri, who stood beside the barbed wire, said she had come to find her son Hilal, who was 19 when he was arrested by soldiers in 1991.

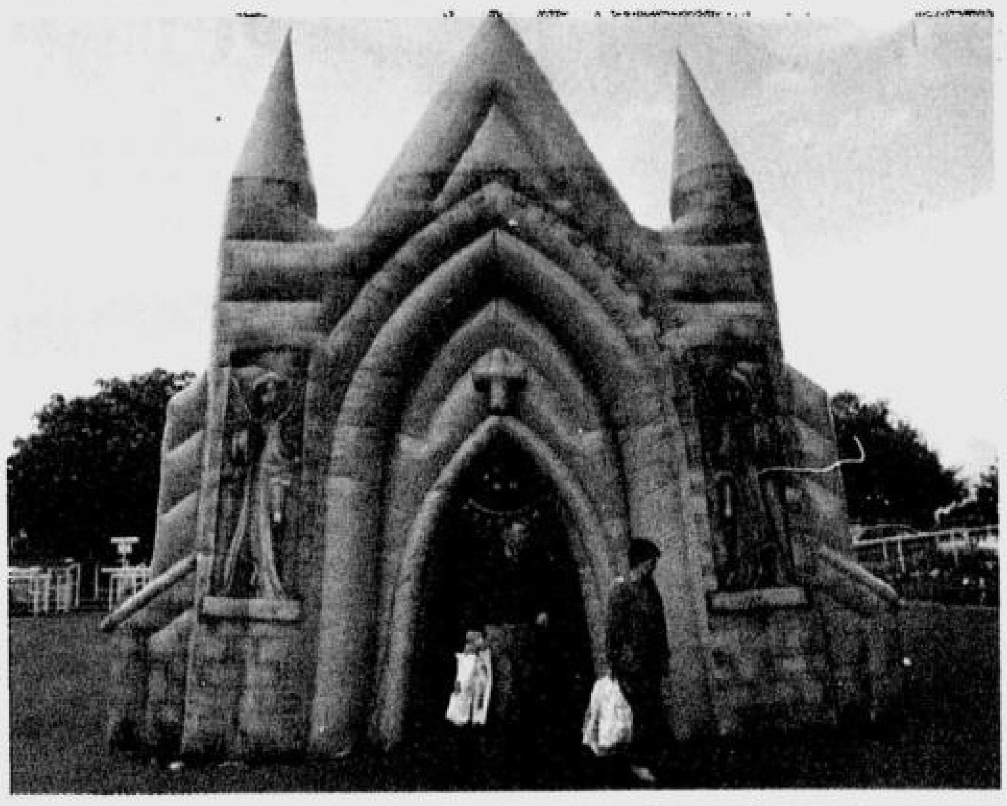
"I was walking with my son in the street and the army came and picked him up," she said. "I tried to stop them but they took him, I don't know why."

US Marines, who arrived earlier Wednesday to secure the site, said they would be bringing water and camouflage netting to provide onlookers protection from the blistering sun.

Capt. David Romley, from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, said they had heard about the site only two days earlier.

"We can take this evidence and present it to a future Iraqi judiciary," Romley said. "We are to help facilitate the reunion of victims and families. They want to excavate the site themselves."

But Peter Bouckaert, a researcher with the London-based group Human Rights Watch, criticized the US-led administration in Iraq for not sending any forensic experts to Hillah and for allowing local people to excavate the mass graves. *AP*



INFLATABLE CHURCH A couple of exhibition goers examine the world's first inflatable church at the National Christian Resources Exhibition, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, May 13. The 47 15.33-meter high creation opened its Gothic arches to worshippers on Tuesday to reveal a blow-up organ, a polyvinyl pulpit, an air-filled altar and fake stained glass windows. REUTERS

US Iraq general accused of war crimes in suit

BRUSSELS, Belgium—A left-wing candidate in Belgium's upcoming parliamentary elections lodged a war crimes complaint Wednesday against US Iraq war commander Gen. Tommy Franks and a US Marine Corps officer, on behalf of 16 Iraqi civilians.

Lawyer Jan Fermon presented the complaint against Franks and a Marine officer he identified as Lt. Col. B.P. McCoy to the federal prosecutors' office despite recent changes in war crimes law to prevent such charges against Americans or citizens of other democracies.

"This is not a symbolic action, my clients want an independent inquiry into what happened," Fermon told reporters as he arrived at the prosecutors' office. Fermon is running in Sunday's elections as a candidate for the small, far-left Resist group.

The case has provoked anger from Washington. America's most senior military officer suggested the complaint and earlier charges against other US officials could jeopardize Belgium's role as a host for Nato and European Union meetings.

"It's looked upon by the US government as a very, very serious situation," Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Tuesday on a visit to Nato headquarters in Brussels.

"It... clearly could have a huge impact on where we gather."

To head off such complaints, the Belgian government last month rushed through changes to laws introduced in the early 1990s that authorize Belgian courts to try individuals for genocide and other war crimes wherever they occurred.

Legal experts said the case against Franks and McCoy would be a first test for the revised law, and predicted it would be thrown out by the prosecutors' office.

"This could be just a spectacular way of catching attention in the media," said Prof. Jan Wouters, director of the Institute for International Law at the University of Leuven.

Two other leftist candidates in Sunday's elections, Dr. Geert Van Moorter and Dr. Colette Moulaert, found the 16 wounded or bereaved Iraqis in whose name the complaint was lodged, while working for a medical aid group in Baghdad during the war.

The war crimes laws were first used to target suspects in Rwanda's 1994 genocide who fled to Belgium, the former colonial ruler of the central African nation.

Since then, complaints have been brought against a string of world leaders including Fidel Castro, Yasser Arafat and Saddam Hussein, although none has gone to trial.

The Belgian parliament revised the law last month after complaints lodged against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, former US President George Bush and current US Secretary of State Colin Powell soured relations with Washington and Jerusalem.

Under the new amendments, Belgian courts should refer foreigners facing war crimes charges to their own countries if they are democracies with a record of fairness in justice. *AP*

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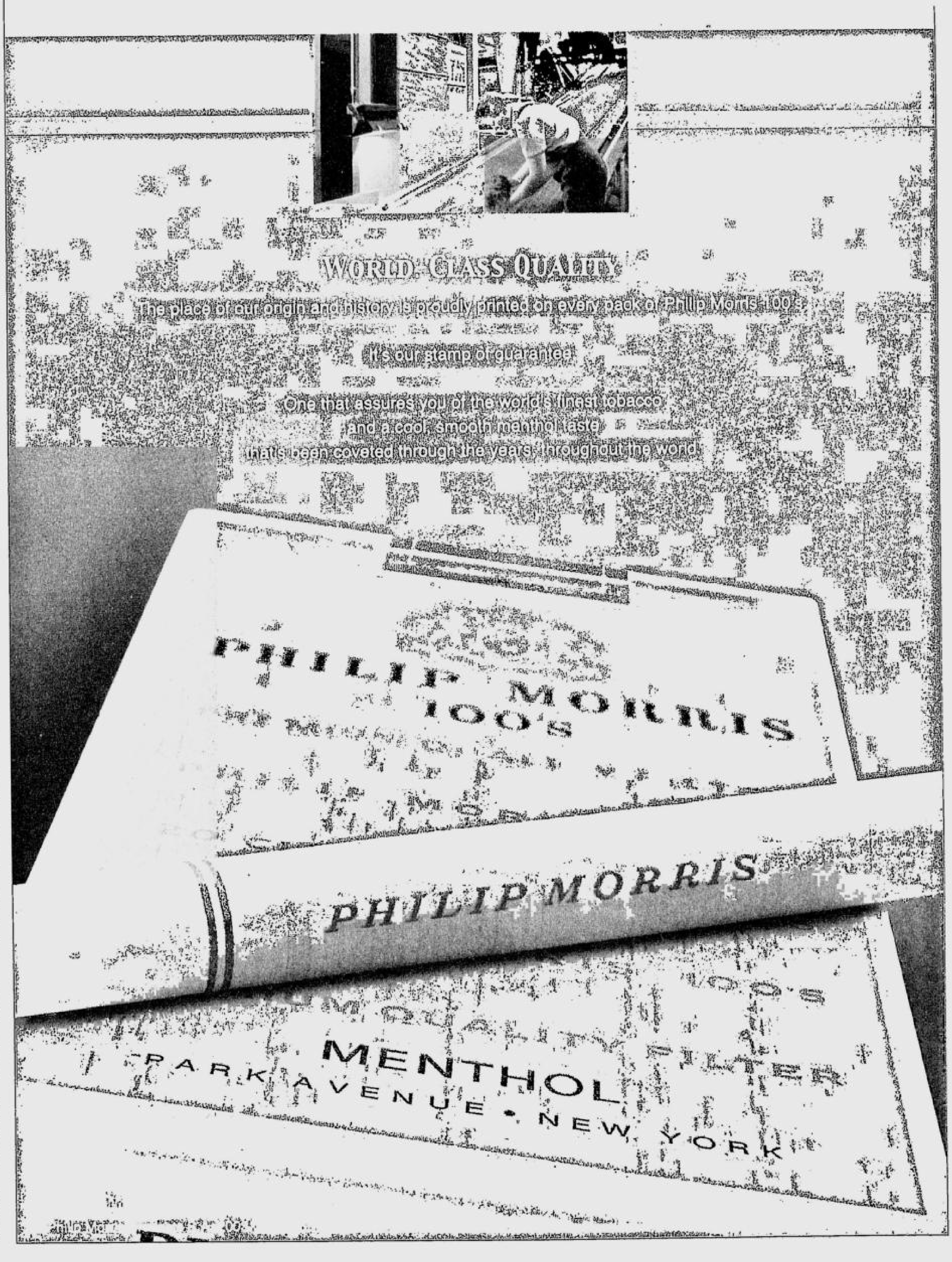
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Menem quits Argentina election

BUENOS AIRES—Former President Carlos Menem has decided to bow out of Argentina's presidential runoff, a top aide said on Tuesday, paving the way for center-left Gov. Nestor Kirchner to be the next president.

"Yes, yes, yes," Diego Guelar, former ambassador to the United States and a top Menem aide, said by telephone when asked if Menem—trailing Kirchner by around 40 points in polls—had decided to resign from the race.

The only Menem aide who came out saying the contrary was Pablo Rojo, top economic adviser, who claimed the election would go ahead as scheduled.

If Menem confirms his exit, Sunday's vote would then be canceled and Kirchner would start a four-year term having won less than a quarter of the votes in a first round, sparking fears Argentina would be plagued by weak leadership.

A widely expected landslide victory would have strengthened Kirchner's legitimacy as Argentina struggles to recover from the economic and political collapse of the past 18 months that saw five presidents govern the country of 36 million.

Menem, 72, has yet made no public comment but he made a sudden appearance from the window of his central Buenos Aires hotel—his campaign headquarters—waving and smiling to cheering crowds of supporters below who were shouting "Menem Won't Go!" from behind police barricades.

His opponents, meanwhile, plastered posters across the capital saying: "You're gone!"

Aides said Menem would travel to his home province of La Rioja on Wednesday.

Speculation that Menem would withdraw to avoid a landslide defeat reached fever pitch on Tuesday. Many expressed rage at his reported exit.

"It's a pity because I'd like to see him defeated," said Mariano Garcia, a 28-year-old office worker.

Like million of Argentines, Garcia blames Menem for a string of corruption scandals in his 1989-1999 government.

Argentina has been governed by unpopular Peronist caretaker President Eduardo Duhalde since he was nominated by Congress in January 2002 after the deaths of at least 27 Argentines in street protests and food looting led to the fall of President Fernando le la Rua.

"Obviously it's going to be very difficult. With this president, Argentina was looking for two things that were extremely important—legitimacy and governablity," said Roberto Bacman, head of CEOP pollsters.

"Menem quitting will wreck the cleanness of the electoral process," said historian Felix Luna.

The local peso currency weakened and the stock market fell on earlier rumors of the resignation of Menem.

There was an atmosphere of an election night in Buenos Aires with TV vans and photographers huddling around the headquarters of each of the candidates.

The campaign team of Kirchner, who is critical of the International Monetary Fund and US diplomacy, said they were still waiting for a formal decision from Menem.

Despite his first round win, Menem was at a huge disadvantage in the runoff because, despite having a hard-core support of around 20 percent, he is widely reviled by a majority of voters. *Reuters*

JFK was a cocaine user, new tell-all book claims

LOS ANGELES—John F Kennedy snorted cocaine with actor Peter Lawford while the two stayed at Frank Sinatra's Palm Springs house in the late 1950s, according to an excerpt from a tell-all book written by Sinatra's former valet.

Writing about the close friendship between Sinatra and the future US president, George Jacobs said that although the Rat Pack singer knew of Kennedy's weakness for women—and went so far as to arrange liaisons for him—he would not have approved of his drug use.

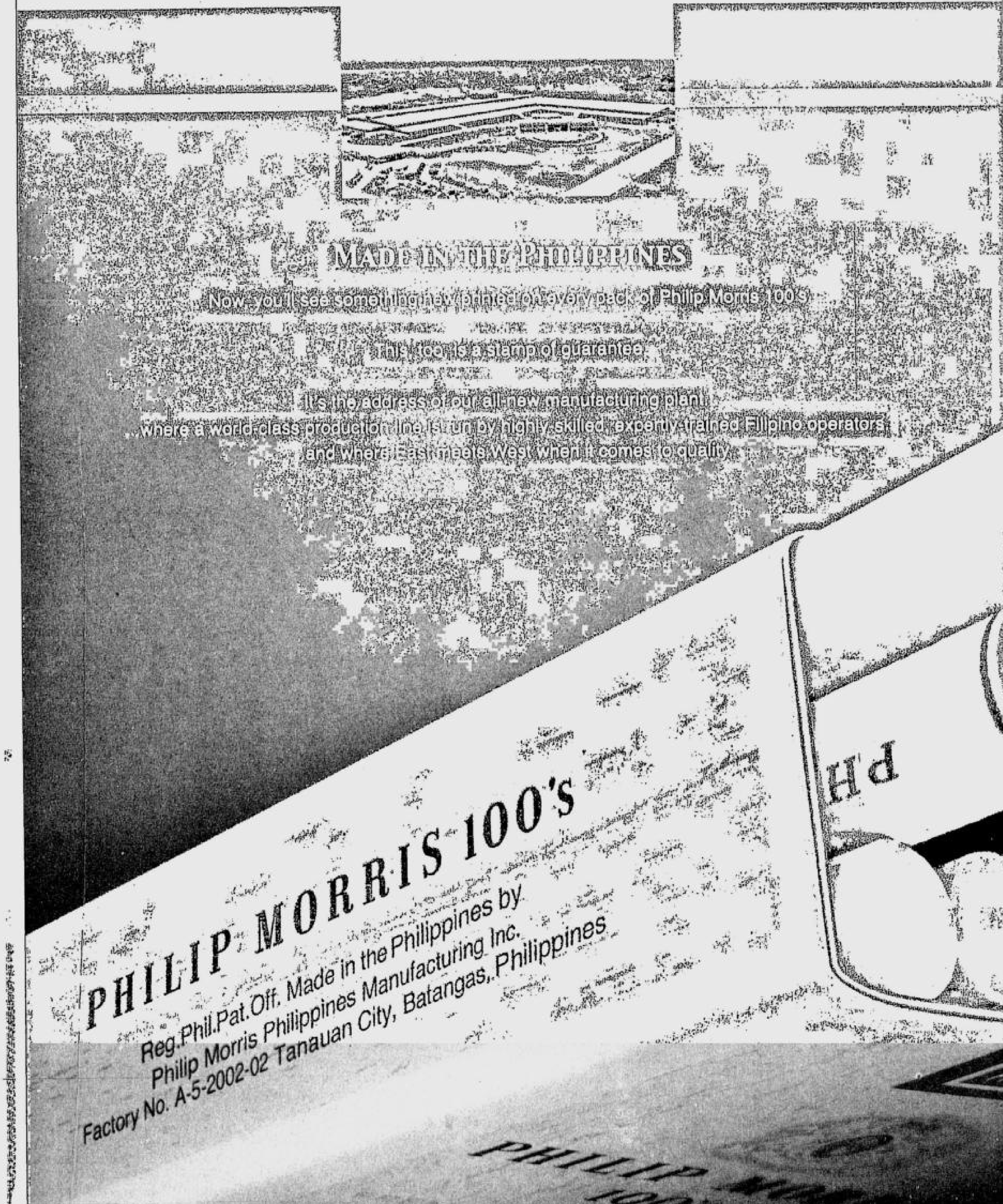
In an excerpt from his forthcoming book "Mr. S," released in the June edition of Playboy Magazine, Jacobs said he was present on several occasions in Palm Springs "when Peter Lawford and the future president did lines of cocaine together in Lawford's guest rooms."

"The first time it happened Jack must have seen the shocked look on my face. 'For my back, George' Kennedy said to me with his bad-boy wink," Jacobs wrote, adding that Lawford pleaded with him not to tell Sinatra.

Lawford was married at the time to Kennedy's sister Pat and both men were frequent guests at Sinatra's Palm Springs compound.

Jacobs, who was Sinatra's valet from 1953 to 1968, said Kennedy had an "endless obsession with sex and gossip. He wanted to know all the Hollywood dirt." *Reuters*

Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to health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Chechnya truck bombing death toll rises to 59

VLADIKAVKAZ, Russia—The death toll in a truck bombing that shattered a government compound in northern Chechnya rose to 59 Wednesday, as investigators pledged to hunt down the organizers of the attack.

Akhmed Dzheirkhanov, the Deputy Minister for Emergency Situations in Chechnya, said that four people had died overnight as a result of injuries sustained in Monday's blast.

Russian President Vladimir Putin at a meeting with Nato-Secretary General Lord Robertson on Tuesday compared the bombing in Chechnya to the deadly blast in Saudi Arabia aimed at foreigners.

"The signature in both places is absolutely identical," Putin, who is seeking to portray Russia's war in Chechnya as part of the international campaign against terrorism, said.

The blast has raised questions about the level of security provided by federal forces in the war-torn republic.

The head of Chechnya's Moscow-backed administration, Akhmad Kadyrov, said Monday's attack proved that it was necessary to "introduce changes in the conduct of the counterterrorist operation" in Chechnya, the Interfax news agency reported.

He proposed that responsibility for fighting rebels be switched to the region's own Interior Ministry instead of the Moscow-based Federal Security Service and Russian troops.

The blast occurred Monday as top officials of the Nadterechny region of northern Chechnya held their regular morning meeting in the government headquarters in Znamenskoye. Three suicide attackers blew up a truck laden with explosives nearby, reducing eight buildings to rubble and killing or injuring government workers, civilian visitors, shopkeepers and residents of neighboring apartments.

Russian and Chechen officials quickly blamed Chechen rebels for the bombing, although the exact motive remained uncertain. The daily newspaper Izvestia reported that the motive might have been retaliation for a recent crack down on oil and metal smuggling from the region. *AP*

US expels 14 Cuban diplomats for espionage

WASHINGTON—The United States on Tuesday expelled 14 Cuban diplomats, seven based at the United Nations and seven from the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, for spying, the State Department said.

The expulsions, which came as tensions between the Cold War foes have mounted after a Cuban crackdown on dissidents, were ordered after a lengthy espionage investigation, officials said.

"In response to certain inappropriate and unacceptable activities, the United States has decided to take strong action," deputy State Department spokesperson Philip Reeker said.

He said seven diplomats from the Cuban Interest Section had been declared persona non grata and seven diplomats from the Cuban Mission to the United Nations had been given 10 days to leave the United States after being informed of the decision earlier Tuesday.

Reeker did not directly link the expulsions to espionage but strongly implied a link by telling reporters that Cuba had a "long record" of spying against the United States.

And he used the usual diplomatic parlance for spying in explaining the decision, accusing the Cuban diplomats, whom he refused to identify, of "activities deemed to be harmful to the United States outside of their official capacity."

Other department officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, were more candid, directly accusing the Cuban diplomats of espionage.

"They were engaged in intelligence activities incompatible with their diplomatic status," one official said, adding that the expulsions were the "result of an ongoing investigation that has occurred over a number of years."

"The activities of these people have been a source of concern to us for some time," the official said. *AP*

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Across the NATION

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ROUNDUP

Davao fire

DAVAO CITY—About P2 million worth of properties were razed in a fire that hit 10 firms near the Sasa wharf here on Monday. FO3 Gerardo Buncalan of the Bureau of Fire Protection said the fire started at Suddenly Eatery at around noon. Buncalan said the fire could have been caused by an electrical short circuit based on the state of wiring recovered from the eatery. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Miner killed

DAVAO CITY—A miner was killed when a tunnel in the gold-rush area in Mt. Diwata, Monkayo town in Compostela Valley caved in on Saturday morning. Police identified the victim as Sancho Papale who, with his brother Alex, allegedly ignored a warning not to enter the tunnel with weak portals. The victim allegedly hit a rock that caused the portal to collapse. His brother was able to get out of the tunnel. Members of the Natural Resources Development Council and Task Force Diwalwal retrieved the victim's body that afternoon. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Sambalilo Fest

A SAMBALILO Festival with 19 barangays participating will be celebrated in Cavinti, Laguna on May 16-25. The festival is sponsored by the Cavinti municipal government under Mayor Floro Esguerra and the Magdapio Club headed by Gen. Nestor Castillo and lawyer Celso Fernandez, according to a news release. This is the first time this kind of festival will be held in the town. Several nongovernment groups like the New Cavite Multipurpose Cooperative headed by chair Remy Fabia were also expected to support the festival.

Advice to studes

LEGAZPI CITY—The Commission on Higher Education here advised students to take courses that offer easy employment after graduation and not those "over-subscribed" ones that offer minimal chances of being employed. CHEd Bicol director Dominador Peralta identified the "over-subscribed courses" as Bachelor of Arts (except AB English and Mathematics) and accounting. Hilarion Zaragosa of the Department of Labor and Employment in Bicol said the courses in demand now were those on information technology and entrepreneurial skills. ***Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Found dead

ANGELES CITY—A 54-year-old American was found dead in his hotel room in Barangay Malabanas here on Tuesday. Police said the body of Stacy Castro, who was identified through his US passport, was found by a bellboy of Marquis Hotel at around 8:30 p.m. in his room's toilet. Castro had slashes in the left forearm and wrist. Found near the body was a 10-inch knife. Senior Supt. Jimmy Restua, city police director, said three suicide notes, apparently written by Castro, were found inside the room.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Trader arrested

GUIGUINTO, Bulacan—Police arrested a 61-year-old businessman here on Saturday after the latter beat up a 7-year-old girl under his care in Barangay Ilang-Ilang. Loreto Trinidad is facing serious physical injury and child abuse charges after he put the girl in a sack and hit her with a belt buckle and bamboo stick. The girl, police said, was left under Trinidad's care after her father died. Neighbors rescued the girl and reported the abuse to the police. ***Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Fire in Pangasinan

URDANETA CITY—An hour-long fire razed portions of the public market here on Wednesday, destroying stalls and goods worth some P80 million. Police said no one was hurt in the fire that started shortly after midnight at a tailoring shop. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Award for website

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Zamboanga City High School, one of the 1,000 beneficiaries of the Personal Computers for Public Schools project of the Department of Trade and Industry, was judged second place in the Local Leaders category of the 2003 CyberFair Awards in Manila, according to a news release. The school bagged the award for its website project "Zamboanga Leaders–Then and Now" that featured the profiles, projects and political struggles of Zamboanga City officials.

FAILED OPERATIONS

2 kidnap victims found dead

ROSARIO, Batangas—In just a span of two days, the body of a 7-year-old-boy who was kidnapped last month was found in this town, while that of a retired Department of Agrarian Reform officer was found in Tuy town.

Both are the results of failed operations of an anti-kidnap group in this town.

The body of kidnap victim Wilfred Jessray Red, 7, a Grade 1 pupil, was found on May 13 at Barangay Nazi, this town, by members of the provincial police, Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer), the Scene of Crime Operations (SOCO) group and the local police.

The boy's exhumed body was positively identified by his father, a businessman, who recognized Wilfred's white T-shirt and red short pants. These were the same clothes that he was wearing when he was kidnapped on April 25 in this town.

SPO4 Armando Natividad, of the town police, who investigated the case, said it was the Pacer who had handled the case.

On May 12, a day before the boy's body was found, the body of another kidnap-for-ransom victim was found in Tuy.

The corpse of retired agrarian reform officer Leopoldo Lejano, who was reported kidnapped on Dec. 20, 2002 was exhumed in a shallow grave near a sugarcane plantation in Barangay Acle, Tuy.

Suspected members of the kidnapping group, identified as Armando Hernandez, 44, of Barangay Acle, and Teddy Maranan, 45, a locksmith, of Barangay Munting Tubig, Balayan town, who were arrested by the Pacer members in an earlier operation, led the team to the shallow grave where Lejano's body was exhumed.

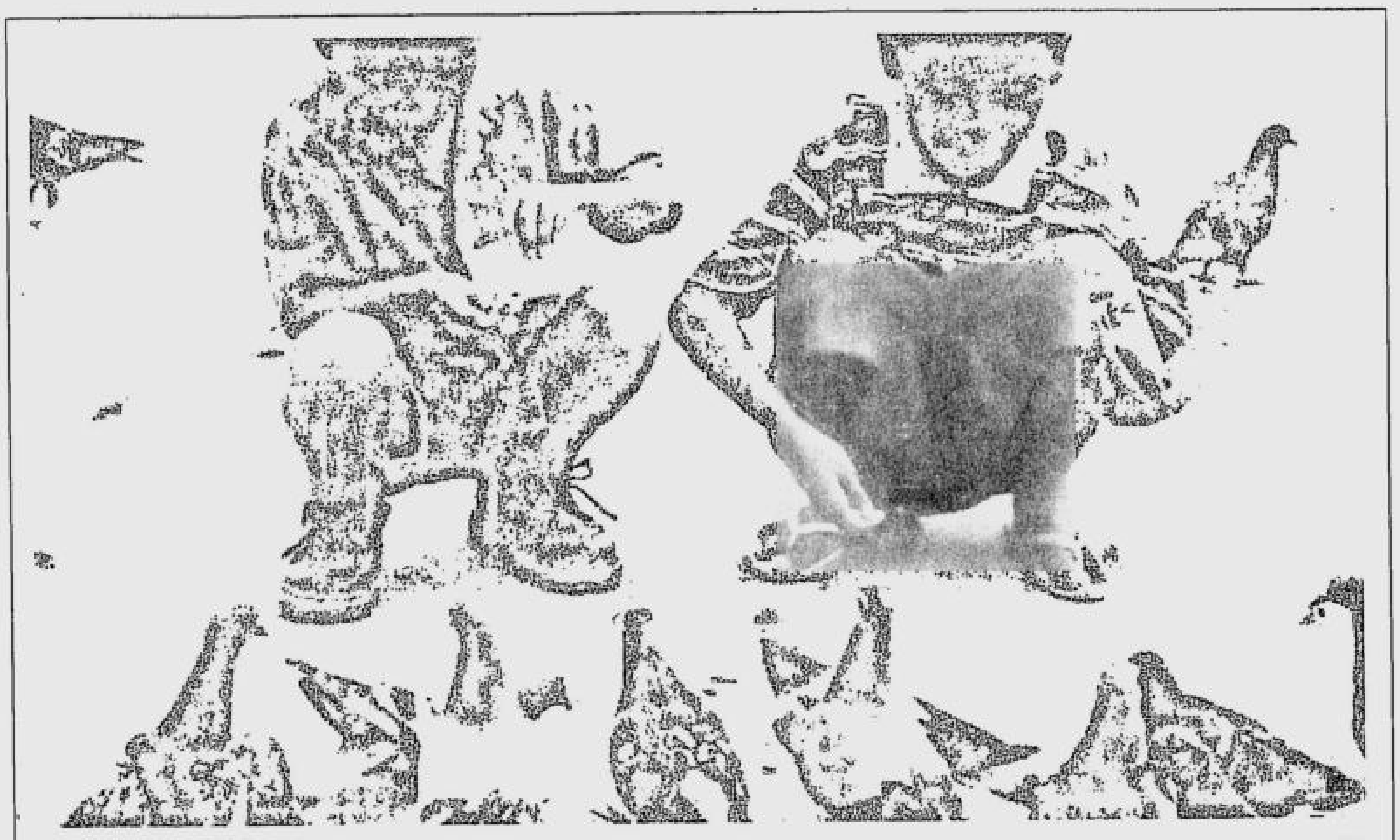
The body was positively identified by relatives through the pair of shoes and pants that were also found in the grave.

Lejano was kidnapped in Lian town, while on his way to his farm. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT IS exactly 367 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.



JOYS OF SUMMER

ING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Two boys share their snacks with the doves at the patio of the San Pedro Cathedral in Davao City, where threats of more attacks from terrorists have been reported.

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5 NBI agents ordered dismissed

By Suzzane B. Salva
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas has ordered the dismissal from service of five agents of the National Bureau of Investigation in Central Visayas who were involved in the botched anti-drug operation that led to the wounding of six resort workers on Dec. 13, 2002.

The order, signed by Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Primo Miro on May 12, was based on the recommendation of Ombudsman-Visayas director Virginia Palanca Santiago.

Grave misconduct

Santiago, who investigated the incident, found the NBI agents guilty of grave misconduct.

Miro also approved her recommendation for the filing of criminal charges of multiple frustrated murder and double attempted murder against the five agents before the regional trial court of Mandaue City.

The Visayas Ombudsman likewise imposed the penalty of perpetual disqualification to hold office against NBI agent Angelito Magno and special investigators, Arnel Pura, Danilo Garay, Rey Tumalon and Teodoro Saavedra.

The five, together with NBI regional director Romulo Manapsal, were investigated for the shooting of the van boarded by Plantation Bay Resort workers whom the NBI agents had mistaken for illegal drug dealers.

Simple misconduct

Manapsal was found guilty of the lesser offense of simple misconduct and was ordered suspended for six months.

It was established that 14 confidential agents (CAs) participated in the botched operation, contrary to an earlier directive of NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco that already scrapped the use of CAs in NBI operations.

The five agents and Manapsal could not be reached for comment. But NBI acting regional director Reynaldo Esmeralda said he found the penalty against the five agents "too harsh."

Too harsh

"They are not claiming they should be exonerated but what they are asking is that proper charges should be imposed. (The) Hardest case that could be filed is multiple frustrated homicide or multiple physical injuries through reckless imprudence but definitely not murder," he said.

The resort workers were on their way home from a Christmas party on Dec. 13, 2002 on board an L-300 van when the NBI agents blocked their path in Looc, Mandaue and chased them for 2 km up to Banilad, Cebu City while incessantly firing at them. Six of the seven workers were wounded. Their van was hit with at least 72 bullets fired from firearms of different calibers.

Victims Michael Monsod, The victims—Nenette Castillon, Gian Carlo Cajoles, Esther Luz Mae Gregorio, Donaldo Enabe and Alfie Fernandez—in separate affidavits, claimed that the NBI fired at them without let-up, despite their pleas for mercy.

Poor hospital management puts SARS program at risk

SAN FERNANDO CITY—Claims of sloppy hospital management practices threaten the effectiveness of the infection control program of the Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center (ITRMC) here. The center is being rehabilitated as a major quarantine facility in the region for persons afflicted with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Dr. Jeisela Balderas-Gaerlan, infectious disease specialist and chair of the hospital's infection control committee for the past 13 years, resigned last week from the oversight body over the recent "mishandling of alleged SARS patients" in the hospital.

The alleged mishandling stemmed from the uncoordinated implementation of "action plans" coming from the offices of acting chief of hospital, Dr. Gilbert de Leon, and his assistant, Dr. Alexander Alviar.

This "sowed panic not only in the hospital but in the entire province," Gaerlan claimed.

In her resignation letter addressed to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, Gaerlan said the DOH advisories on SARS dated as early as March 19 were never communicated to the infection control committee for its information and compliance.

The committee was also not "informed or involved" in meetings or action plans about SARS control, Gaerlan said.

De Leon told the INQUIRER that there are infection control heads in each department of the hospital and that if Gaerlan, as committee chair, had been bypassed, she should have issued them memoranda and gave copies to higher authorities.

De Leon said the infection control committee is only one of about 35 committees at the ITRMC and that the knowledge required to run it is "something that all doctors know."

"Even I know it because I am a pathologist and a member of the Philippine Society of Infectious Diseases," he said.

He has since appointed Dr. Luisa Ordono to replace Gaerlan.

In a complaint submitted to the Department of Health, Gaerlan and 59 other medical specialists and nursing staff of ITRMC sought the administrative suspension of De Leon for alleged graft and corruption and incompetence.

They claimed that De Leon, who was appointed in February last year, "has not held meetings or consultations with the various department heads" in decision-making and "has unjustly deprived some personnel of their authority in favor of people within his inner circle."

De Leon told the INQUIRER that he has his own management style which may not sit well with everybody but this is something the Civil Service Commission can judge based on its own criteria.

He also possesses all the credentials required for his position, he said. *Gia Damaso-Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Watch out for GM potato, rice, farmers warned

HUNGER strikers protesting the government's decision to import commercial *Bacillus thuringiensis*-injected corn (Bt corn) warned Cordillera farmers in Baguio City on Monday that genetically modified (GM) potatoes and rice are next on the government's list.

"People in the north, particularly farmers, should understand that the precedent-setting policy of allowing the commercialization of Bt corn, has opened the floodgates. More GM food will be coming in, and the clock is nearing 2004, when the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade has authorized full tariff liberalization all over the world," said Michael Bengwayan, a Baguio-based freelance agricultural researcher. He joined the hunger strike in Metro Manila against the commercialization of Bt corn.

Bengwayan said among the potential GM crops that would imperil indigenous food products under complete trade liberalization are a GM potato strain and a rice variety that an American-owned agriculture firm had been trying to market to Asia.

The protesters, who have been holding a hunger strike in front of the Department of Agriculture offices in Quezon City, sent Bengwayan to Baguio on Saturday to join the hunger strike of American Peace Corps volunteer Andrew Haralam. Haralam's hunger strike started on Thursday night at the city's Malcolm Square.

"I am very worried about (Malacañang) because of its tendency to follow the lead of the US, instead of the United Nations. There is a UN document seeking tighter controls over GMOs (genetically modified organisms), and the Philippines is a signatory to this. The US is not," Bengwayan said.

He claimed that the government continues to refuse to discuss the basis of its tests, which claim to have cleared the Bt corn for sale in Philippine markets using Food and Agriculture Office standards.

But Emmanuel Borlongan, Monsanto Philippines government and public affairs lead director, said their critics and the hunger strikers have been raising "old and rehashed" issues.

Borlongan said the high-yielding crop has been used since 1997 in the US and had not shown any adverse effect on people's health and the environment as claimed by their critics.

Bengwayan had finished his sixth day of hunger strike here on Monday, while Haralam passed his fourth day inside a tent set up in the middle of the square.

A companion, Edwin Tadeo of the Cordillera Green Network, finished his third day of hunger strike. Two artists, who originally sat with Haralam, have withdrawn.

Catholic Church leaders in Isabela and more farmers in Bohol have expressed solidarity with hunger strikers opposing the Bt corn commercialization.

Ilagan Bishop Sergio Utleg and Fr. Gregorio Uanan, director of the Diocese of Ilagan's social action director and spokesperson of the Anti-GMO Multi-Sectoral Alliance of Isabela, said in a joint statement that they will continue to hold protest actions to stop the commercialization of Bt corn.

Isabela was one of the Bt corn trial sites in the country.

Utleg said they are not against development and modern technology but he asked who would benefit from these modern technology.

The church leaders have accused Monsanto of imposing a monopoly in the corn industry.

"There are credible scientists who tell us that it (Bt corn) is toxic and that it can contaminate other corn varieties through cross-pollination," Uanan said.

More support

The Bohol Network of Farmers Rights (BNFR), an umbrella organization of more than 30 groups from different political ideologies, issued a statement signaling its sympathy campaign against the controversial corn project.

BNFR members appeared before the provincial board on Monday to lobby against the crop.

Vice Gov. Julius Caesar Herrera, chair of the board's agriculture committee, agreed to meet with the group leaders next week.

The farmers said GMOs increased the threat of genetic contamination and pollution against local corn including *tiniguib*, the traditional variety preferred by farmers.

When this happens, they said, farmers could be sued by the Bt gene patent holders, in this case, Monsanto.

They stressed that Monsanto had previously filed and won such suits against both American and Canadian farmers, who were subsequently fined tens of thousands of dollars. *Vincent Cabreza and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Chito A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Suspected MILF rebels burn bus in Zambo town

PAGADIAN CITY—Suspected Moro rebels sowed terror in Zamboanga del Sur anew even as Malacañang gave the Moro Islamic Liberation Front until June 1 to stop its attacks or face being declared a terror group.

The warning came in the wake of the MILF's attack on Siocon and the spate of bombings in key cities of Mindanao.

Yesterday, bonnet-wearing gunmen flagged down a bus chartered by village officials of Tabina town, robbed them of their belongings and set the bus on fire.

Brig. Gen. Trifonio Salazar, commander of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, described the burning as another "terroristic attack" on innocent civilians.

He said the suspected rebels, armed with automatic rifles, flagged down the Armesin bus at around 6:30 a.m., as it was cruising Purok Manga in Barangay Lukuban in Dinas town, also in Zamboanga del Sur, about 15 km south of this city.

Col. Ignacio Obligacion, commanding officer of the Army's 51st Infantry Battalion, said the bus was bringing about 50 barangay officials of Tabina to a seminar organized by the Ombudsman here.

Obligacion said that as soon as the bus stopped, the suspected rebels ordered the passengers at gunpoint to disembark.

"They then told us to drop on the ground and took the wallets, jewelry and the personal belongings of the passengers," Joleto Dinopol, 26, assistant bus conductor, said.

Dinopol said the gunmen ordered the driver, Sofronio Sabanal, to park the bus diagonally in the middle of the road so as to prevent motorists from passing by.

They then poured gasoline onto the vehicle before setting it afire.

Dinopol said the operation lasted about 10 minutes. The gunmen fled toward Barangay Baka.

In Lanao del Sur, soldiers on Tuesday killed at least three Moro rebels in separate encounters in Munai and Piagapo towns.

Maj. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said soldiers belonging to the 58th Infantry Battalion clashed with about 40 MILF rebels in Barangay Tamparan in Munai at around 7:30 a.m. A rebel was killed.

At around 9 a.m., another clash broke out in Piagapo. Two rebels died. *Hernan P. dela Cruz and Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

VILLAGE children play near the burned passenger bus in Purok Manga, Barangay Lukuban in Dinas town, Zamboanga del Sur.

HERNAN DELA CRUZ/ PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Tension grips Zambo Sur town as more join oust-mayor drive

TAMBULIG, Zamboanga del Sur—Tension grips this tiny rice-producing town as more people showed support to the movement aimed at ousting the mayor.

The tension started with the detention last Friday of Catholic priest Dexter Zamoras, Vice Mayor George Aleman and four others for libel in connection with the ouster movement.

Fanning the tension is the assassination of the town's police chief Sunday morning in Pagadian City and the reported involvement of the New People's Army in seeking a resolution process to the "shaping ferment of the people."

Senior Insp. Aurelio Indus is a key witness in the libel suit filed by Mayor Eduardo Balaod against several Oppose Balaod Movement (OBM) members. Balaod suspected the killing was related to the ouster movement.

Balaod's pronouncement created a stir among the residents, who were increasingly being pushed to identify themselves with the two contending camps.

Four days into detention at the police station, the jailed OBM members, led by Zamoras and Aleman, continuously received more visitors who brought them food and offered words of encouragement.

On Sunday, Catholic parishioners were obliged to troop to the police station instead of going to Mass.

Zamoras' detention has already affected his pastoral duties like celebrating mass at a hinterland village on Saturday during a fiesta. But he is confident the people understood his predicament.

The priest said "this snowballing public sympathy is an indication of the support gained by the ouster movement."

As tension rose, Balaod appealed to the residents to be judicious in taking actions in order to maintain peace in the town.

"I have asked the people of Tambulig, especially my supporters, not to be swayed by emotions, and to always uphold the law as this is the only reliable anchor that we have in this trying times," Balaod said.

The OBM was launched on May 1. But the beginning of the protest movement dates back to last year when farmers, belonging to the group Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Tambulig (Nagmata), raised their voice against "usurious rates" charged by the local government under its agricultural loan program.

The farmers later found allies among local government employees who have been complaining of non-remittance of GSIS contributions, among many other issues. They banded together and with the help of progressive groups and individuals, launched their first protest action against Balaod on Dec. 10. *Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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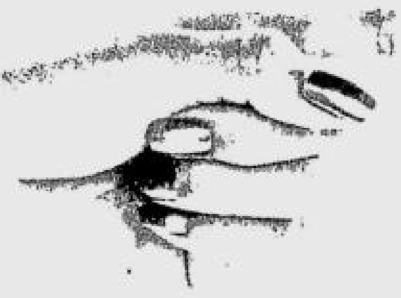

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Los Baños folk go back to brown rice

By Marlon Ramos
Los Baños, Laguna

SURIGAO native Rogelio Cuyno remembers the days when his mother would ask him and his brother to pound newly harvested *pulay* just before lunchtime.

Using the mortar and pestle, the two would pound the grains until they produced brown rice. This could be strenuous and time-consuming, Cuyno said, "but the heavy load is nothing compared to the satisfying taste of brown rice. It's nutritious, too."

The 62-year-old country director of the Asia Rice Foundation (ARF) says he misses the distinct taste of brown rice, with the market now filled with regularly milled rice.

Three years ago, the ARF decided to reintroduce brown rice in Los Baños, Laguna, some 60 km from Manila. The residents are "receptive and enlightened to the idea of brown rice consumption," Cuyno said.

Since last month, the town, known as the Science and Nature City of the South because of the numerous research institutions in the area, has started to bring back brown rice to Filipino tables.

The municipal government has also thrown its support to the project.

Experimental

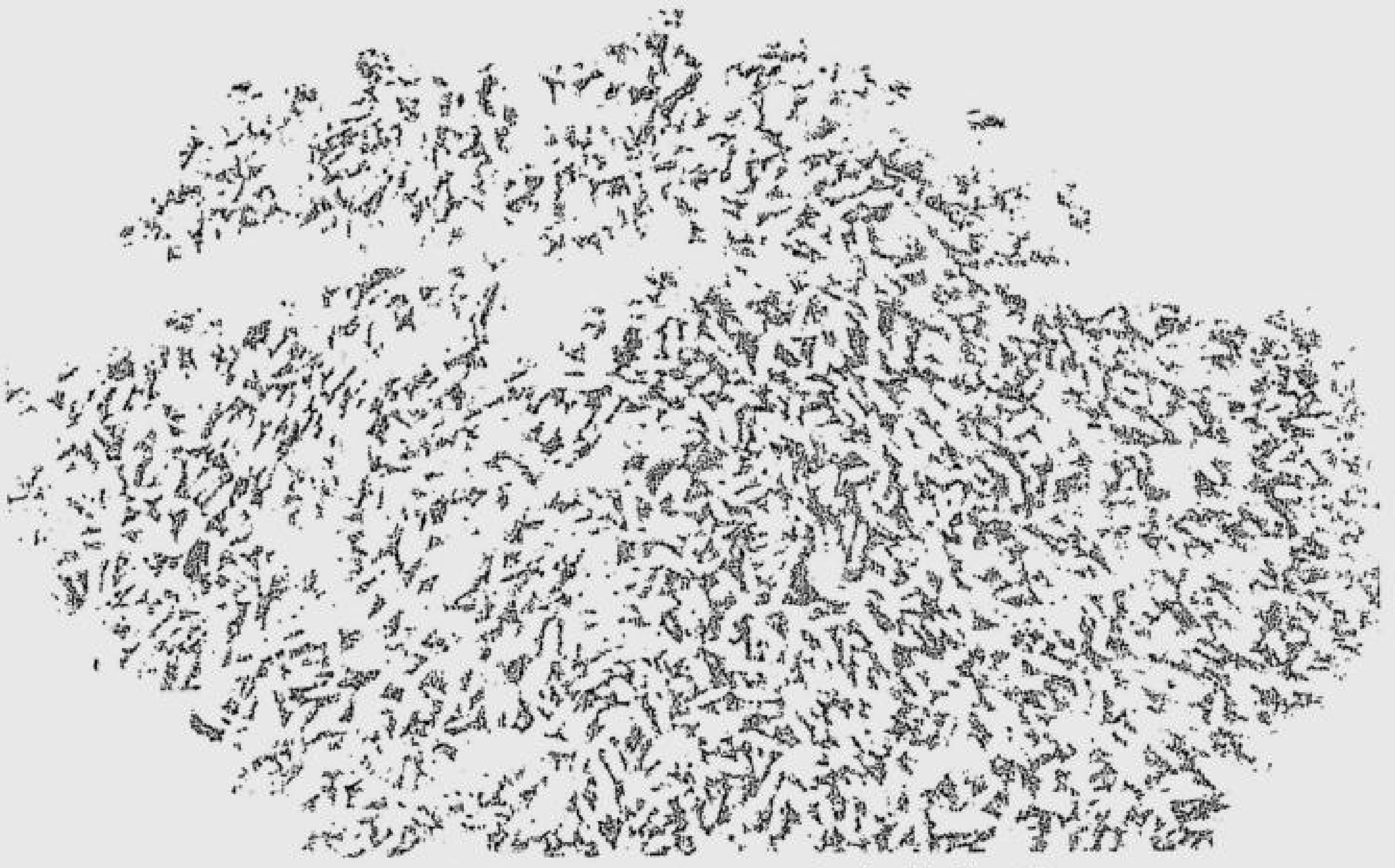
Mayor Caesar Perez said he knew the advantages of consuming brown rice, being a farmer himself. "I'm used to eating that."

On April 24, selected town employees, who usually take their lunch at the town's canteen, agreed to take part in a brown rice feeding program. A week later, they were asked to evaluate their experience.

The majority affirmed that brown rice was better than polished rice in terms of taste and smell. Some, however, complained that the texture of the grains was somewhat coarse owing to the fact that the rice was milled only once.

But another said it was "more fulfilling and heavier as compared to regular milled rice."

Next month, Perez plans to include children in day-care centers in the brown rice feeding program. He also intends to enjoin 10 families from Los Baños to include brown rice in their daily menu.



BROWN RICE, *or pinawa* **in Southern Tagalog, is unpolished rice known to reduce the risk of heart disease.**
PHOTO COURTESY OF ASIA RICE FOUNDATION

Unpolished

Brown rice, called "*pinawa*" in Southern Tagalog, had been widely known in the country until the early 1950s when modern milling machines were introduced to farmers.

Cuyno said the milling technology erased brown or unpolished rice from the Filipino consciousness. It also changed consumer tastes and preferences in favor of white or polished rice.

"Now, only health-conscious individuals and a few *balikbayan* (returning Filipinos) consume brown rice. Germany is probably the top consumer of brown rice in Europe," Cuyno noted.

Brown rice is partially polished rice traditionally produced by hand pounding and using a stone grinder. Only its hull or husk (*ipa*) is removed from the milling process, leaving the bran (*darak*) behind.

It is not exactly brown. It could be brownish, purplish, to reddish in color. It gets its color from the bran left on the grain.

Drying

Drying the grains the natural way in the shade, or by sun drying, is the modern method of producing brown rice.

During rainy months, the grains are mechanically dried in controlled temperature to avoid overheating and over-drying. The grains are pressed by a pair of rubber rollers to remove the husks.

A blower cleans the rice of hull dust, bran particles and broken grains.

Cuyno said 65 percent of the total energy requirement to process regular milled rice was saved because no whitening or polishing process was needed in producing brown rice.

"Milling brown rice could also be done in regular milling machines by avoiding the grains (sic) from reaching the polishing stage. Simply put, it should go through milling only once," he added.

Nutritious

Cuyno said while white rice was associated with a classy lifestyle because of its polished grains, brown rice sugested a poorly managed paddy because of its "dirty" appearance.

"But beyond the dirty look is a wealth of nutrients contained in the bran layer," said a brochure of the ARF.

Municipal nutritionist Teresita Silo agreed that brown rice contains more essential vitamins and minerals than white rice.

Unpolished rice contains essential oils and fibers important to the body, Silo noted.

"Fibers are known to prevent heart diseases and help in maintaining a healthy gastrointestinal system," she said.

The ARF added that essential oils in the bran could prevent heart disease by decreasing serum cholesterol, a major risk factor in heart diseases.

Pharmacological studies also showed that brown rice contains phytate, a component that reduces iron absorption, which may prevent a certain type of cancer. Phytate can also lower levels of glucose, insulin, cholesterol and triglycerides.

Cuyno explains that although phytate can abort mineral absorption, this can be countered by eating fruits.

He noted that brown rice might be more economical than white rice. A kilo could produce 12 cups of cooked rice while white rice could only make 10 cups.

Preparation

Brown rice can replace any dish with which white rice is matched. But unlike polished rice, brown rice should be soaked in water for 30 minutes before cooking. This could also save a lot of energy, as soaking reduces cooking time.

The proportion for cooking this type of rice is two cups of water for every cup of brown rice.

There is no need to wash brown rice as it is hygienically processed. One can prolong its shelf-life by storing it inside a refrigerator in an airtight container.

Cuyno said *champorado* (glutinous rice cooked in chocolate) made of brown rice is exceptionally delicious.

At the moment, brown rice is not readily available on the market. It sells for P28-30 a kilo in areas where it is available, making it more unpopular among ordinary consumers.

But Cuyno said the price would decrease if demand increased. Encouraging millers to produce brown rice would help a lot in bringing the prices down, he said.

At present, the Susi Foundation in Tiaong, Quezon produces the majority of brown rice in the market.

A former University of the Philippines-Los Baños professor produces brown rice in small quantities, using the Pinawa as brand name.

Sealed in transparent bags, the Pinawa is premium quality brown rice produced from rice varieties MS8, IR841 and Burdagol. Grain varieties are classified as special, popular or fancy.

Famous

The ARF hopes brown rice can be made famous, just like in other countries.

In Thailand, the King supported the campaign to produce brown rice, making it popular among all economic classes.

"We intend to ride on the popularity brought to this town by UP-Los Baños and *buko* (young coconut) pie. Normally, these things come to mind whenever tourists come over. In the future, we want to hear people saying 'Los Baños is where people eat brown rice,'" Cuyno said.

He added that the ARF was planning a four-level campaign to make brown rice popular nationally.

Feeding programs would be set up in communities, schools and barangay units. Towns and cities would also be asked to participate, just like what the foundation did in Los Baños.

The ARF would tap government and private agencies in encouraging the consumption of brown rice. Cuyno said they had already asked the International Rice Research Institute to include brown rice in their employees' monthly rice rations. An outreach project involving Rotary Clubs has also been planned.

A national level campaign would be undertaken with the help of the National Food Authority, Department of Agriculture and other concerned agencies.

Mount Malinao faces clear, present danger

By Joyce Mejillano
Malinao, Albay

SERVING as a refuge to many species of endemic plants and animals, Mount Malinao in Albay is one of the few remaining forests in the country that are in dire need of protection.

A team from the Institute of Biological Sciences of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños in Laguna found during an expedition last year that the mountain has been an important home of the Philippine Fairy Bluebird and other endangered species endemic only to Luzon Island.

Malinao is one of several mountains that form a volcanic chain in Bicol, along with Mount Isarog, Mount Iriga, Mount Masaraga and the country's majestic Mayon Volcano on the eastern border of the peninsula.

At its northern foot lies the Lalo River that flows to Lake Buhi, home of *sinarapan*, the world's smallest fish. At the eastern portion is the Quinale River that spills into the Lagonoy Gulf, home of the breathtaking Curangon Riffs.

Malinao has an inner crater facing the coastal areas of the town, which is between Tiwi town and Tabaco City. The crater was earlier described as a primordial forest that resembled a "lost world" where steep slopes were covered with lush cloud forest.

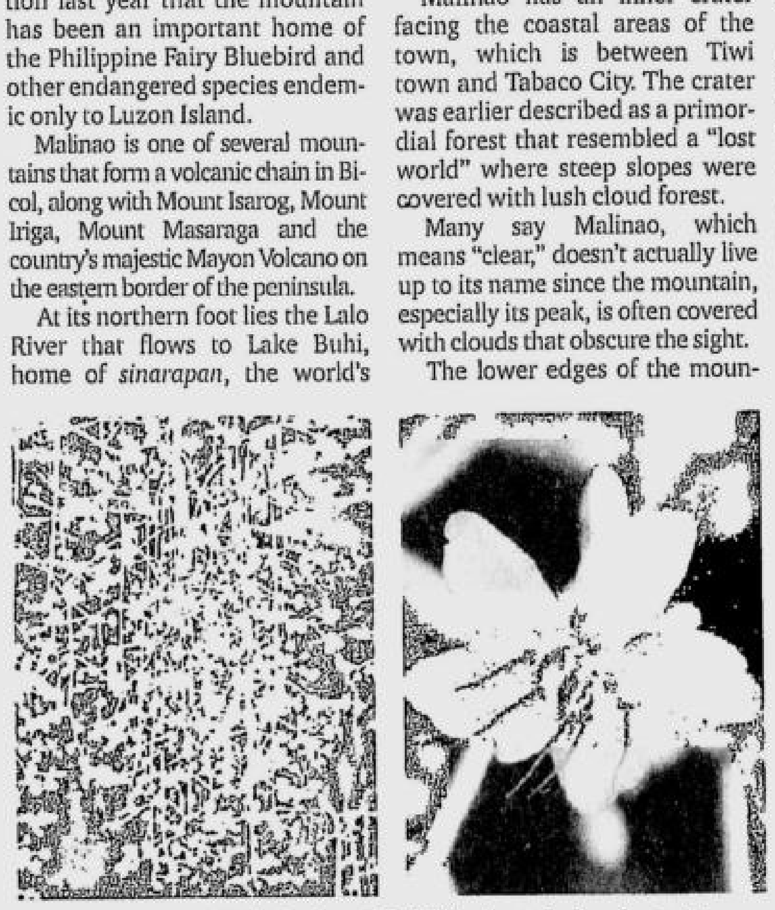
Many say Malinao, which means "clear," doesn't actually live up to its name since the mountain, especially its peak, is often covered with clouds that obscure the sight.

The lower edges of the mountain extend to the northeast toward the coast, forming steep cliffs along the eastern portion of the shoreline between Camarines Sur and Albay. This area is covered mostly with secondary forests and the country's best hardwood species, like narra and molave.

Much of the remaining rainforest cover is found on the eastern slopes of the mountain and mostly hidden from view unless observed from Tabaco and Tiwi.

Around 15 species of endangered fauna—including eight species of bird, two species of frogs and two species of lizards—can be found in the mountain, according to the expedition's report. Four species of dipterocarps and a big number of different varieties of orchids, some of which are known to be endemic only in Albay, can also be found.

Malinao also has at least different forest types along its slopes.



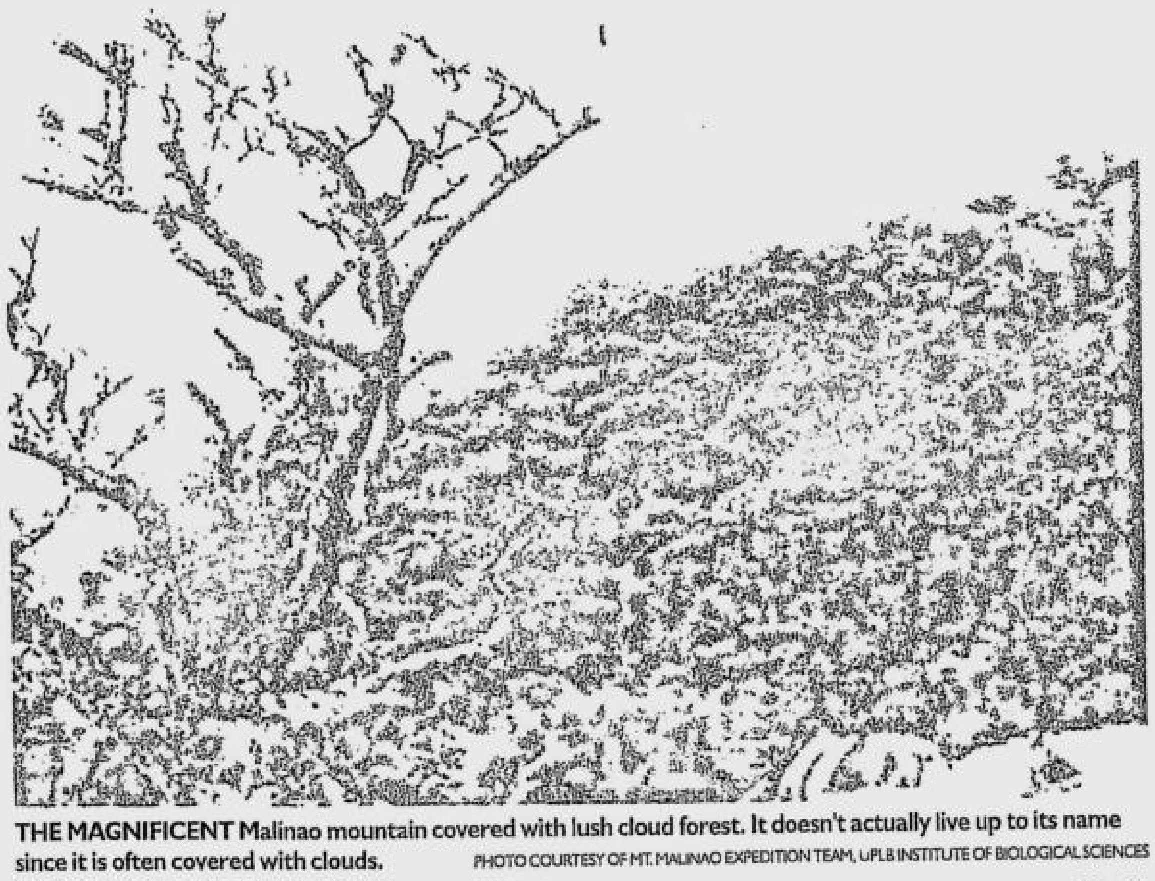
THE ENDANGERED Kaka-kapa Medinilla plants belonging to the *Melastomaceae* family are found on Mt. Malinao.
PHOTO COURTESY OF MT MALINAO EXPEDITION TEAM, UPLB INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Deteriorating charm

Behind the fascinating beauty of the mountain, local government officials and environmentalists are alarmed over its apparent deterioration, threatening the rare creatures in its forest refuge.

"Malinao is now under threat from excessive harvesting of species with economic values and other manmade activities," said Rodolfo Matusalem, provincial environment and natural resources officer, in a report released during the launching of the Malinao Biodiversity Conservation and Eco-Tourism Program on March 27.

The transformation of natural habitats into agricultural plantations and other sites, climate change, as well as "environmental pollutants" arising from increasing human demand for limited natural resources, also contribute to its degradation, Matusalem added.



THE MAGNIFICENT Malinao mountain covered with lush cloud forest. It doesn't actually live up to its name since it is often covered with clouds.
PHOTO COURTESY OF MT. MALINAO EXPEDITION TEAM, UPLB INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

He warned that saving Malinao's forest had become urgent, and concerned parties and individuals should now worry about the decline of numerous species, genetic diversity and even the whole ecosystem of the mountain.

Protected area

The local government has initiated moves to preserve its "last frontier." It already passed a resolution urging President Macapagal-Arroyo, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Energy, to proclaim Mount Malinao a protected area under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act of 1991.

The move, according to Carlos Cortan, representative of the town council during the launching of the project, "is directed toward the ecological management, rehabilitation and development of the area to be undertaken in a sustainable manner to ensure the conservation of its biological diversities."

The campaign earned support from concerned government agencies and other non-government groups and private entities like Philippine Geothermal Inc. in Tiwi. They, in turn, urged the local government to design and provide alternative livelihood programs to affected stakeholders, especially those who depend mainly on forest resources as source of their daily subsistence.

Amy Deniega, head of the Department of Education in Malinao, said "the government needs to give them another source of livelihood so they can also survive if resources from the mountain should become unavailable due to its protected status," she said.

The local officials were urged to hold consultations, especially among stakeholders, to get sentiments from all sides.

Cortan said that if the degradation of Malinao continued, its coastal area would also suffer, especially because Malinao has its Curangon Shoal, which is home to many marine species. Some of the species are already considered endangered.

The Curangon Shoal, according to Maria Ravanilla, tourism regional director, is on the map of the nation's best diving sites.

"If we (do) not act now, this natural beauty surrounding Mt Malinao will also deteriorate,' Cortan said.

Strunk arrested by US marshals in California

From page A1

The Philippine government has 60 days to initiate Strunk's extradition.

But Strunk lawyer Alma Mallonga was quick to say that there was "an element of unfairness" in the arrest.

She said Strunk was innocent and was willing to face the murder charge "to make sure that justice is done."

She also pointed out that under the RP-US extradition treaty, a party could seek someone's provisional arrest only in a case of "extreme urgency."

"If the [Department of Justice] has information that Mr. Strunk has plans to leave the US, then there is an urgency, and the invocation of the provision of the treaty for a provisional arrest is justified. But since there is no urgency, I can't understand the logic of a provisional arrest," Mallonga said.

She theorized that the DOJ invoked the provision because the process was less stringent than filing a formal request for extradition.

Strunk, a longtime resident of the Philippines, flew to California in January 2002 to tend to his mother who was stricken with leukemia. The mother has since died.

He had promised to return if he was "needed" in the investigation of Blanca's murder. But he was quoted as saying lately that he did not expect to get justice in the Philippines.

Veteran actress Caridad Sanchez, a good friend of Blanca's and also her longtime neighbor at White Plains, Quezon City, told the INQUIRER that it would be best for Strunk to return to the Philippines to defend himself.

"I'm not saying he did it," Sanchez said. "We are not accusing anyone unless that someone is proven guilty. But I believe that's the best for him. He can explain everything in court."

Sanchez and Blanca were part of the Golden Girls, the LVN circle of stars that included Marita Zobel, Luz Valdez, the late Bong Eraña (former child star Nenita Vidal) and the late Charito Solis.

Posting bail

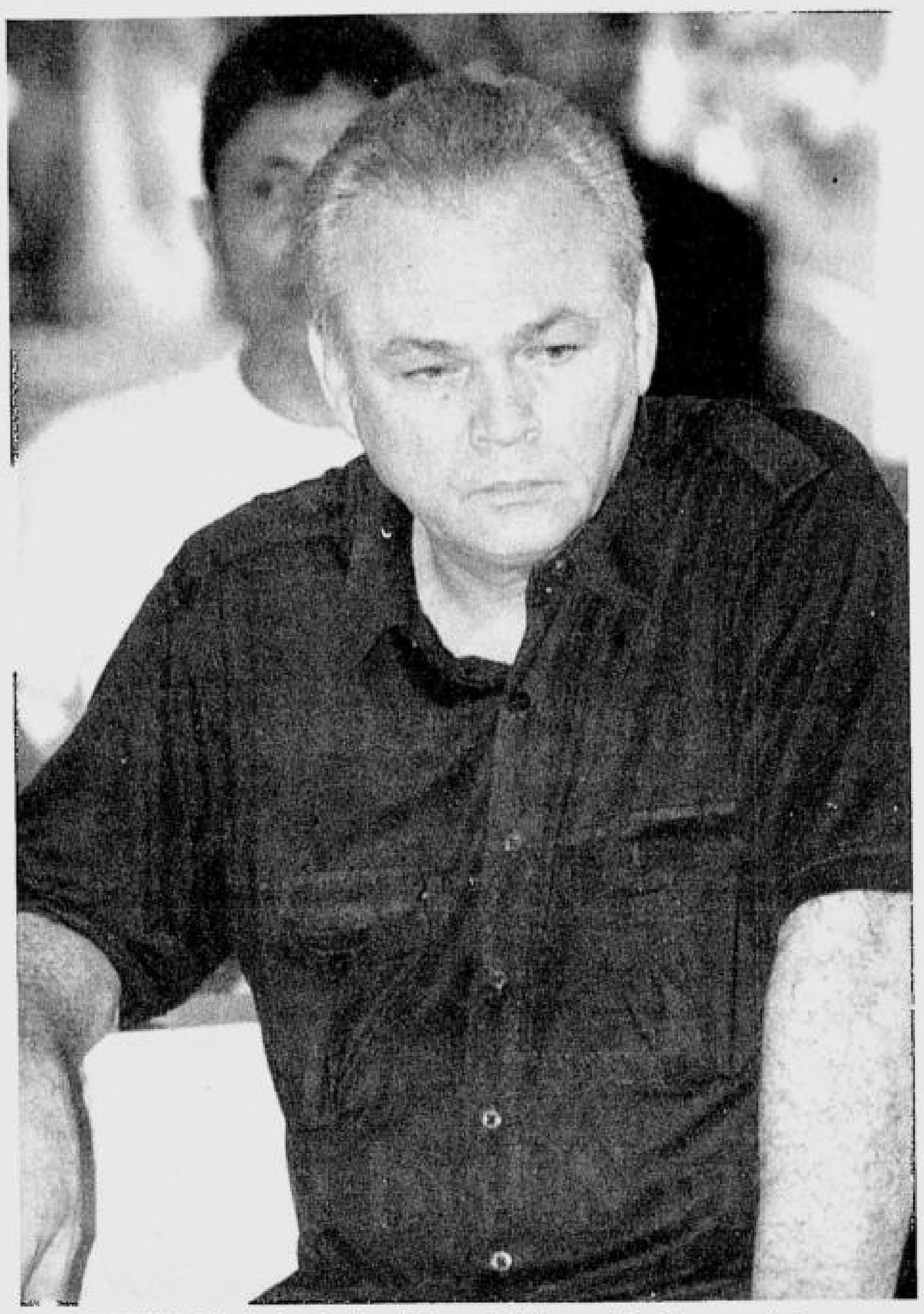
Strunk may gain temporary freedom if he is allowed to post bail by the extradition court, according to Datumanong.

"[But] we have not received information that he had asked for bail," the justice secretary said. "He can always [do so], but this would again depend on the sound discretion of the [US] court."

Citing his experience with "extraditees wanted for crimes against persons, like murder," Ricardo Diaz, chief of the National Bureau of Investigation's Interpol unit, said Strunk might be extradited to the Philippines within six months.

But while the process could take longer because Strunk is expected to fight his extradition, Diaz does not expect the US courts to allow the American to post bail, as did Charlie "Atong" Ang, the fugitive friend of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

"This is murder," Diaz pointed out. "Atong Ang was granted bail because the US court said the evidence against him was an uncorroborated accusation by a corrupt government official. I believe [Strunk] will not be granted bail."



ROD STRUNK: Is it the beginning of the end of the road for the suspected murderer of his wife, actress Nida Blanca? PDI PHOTO

Justice Undersecretary Merceditas N. Gutierrez said she had prepared an extradition request for Datumanong's signature and subsequent forwarding to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The DFA will submit the document to the US extradition court, which will then set the date of the hearing.

Datumanong believes that Strunk will not be able to present valid arguments to block his extradition.

"We look forward to having him back in the Philippines now that he has been arrested ... so that we can start the trial," Datumanong said.

According to the NBI's Diaz, the US courts will not cite Strunk's being an American as a reason not to extradite him to the Philippines.

"His arrest is a good development, and shows that justice is moving," Diaz said.

'Premature' arrest

Mallonga said Strunk would be represented by American lawyers in the extradition case.

She also described her client's arrest as "premature," saying she and lawyers of the Siguion-Reyna Montecillo & Ongsiako Law Office had challenged the validity of the arrest warrant issued by Quiros.

The motion to recall the issuance of the warrant is still pending with the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

Mallonga claimed that should the Pasig court sustain its decision on the issuance of the warrant, the defense panel had "other legal remedies."

"We can still go up [to the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court]," she said.

But in Diaz's opinion, there is a strong case against Strunk.

He said that apart from the arrest warrant, the Philippine government had also submitted to the US extradition court the "criminal information" that the DOJ had filed with the Pasig court, the NBI's investigation report, witnesses' statements, and the findings of the investigation of the scene of the crime.

Blanca, whose career on stage, screen and television spanned 51 years, was found stabbed to death on Nov. 7, 2001, in a high-rise parking lot in Greenhills, San Juan. She was 65.

Medel had tagged Strunk as the mastermind of the murder. But he later recanted, claiming that police had tortured him to confess. Prosecutors, however, said his statement could still be used.

On Feb. 14, the DOJ indicted Strunk before the Pasig court on the strength of Medel's recanted handwritten confession. Medel himself was also charged, along with a Jane Doe.

"Summing up the evidence, it shows that more likely than not, a crime has been committed and was committed by the respondents," said a DOJ panel composed of Senior State Prosecutor Archimedes Manabat and State Prosecutor Mark Jalandoni.

The panel found probable cause that the two had conspired in killing Blanca.

Still a mystery

But despite the finding of probable cause against Strunk and Medel, the motive for Blanca's murder remains a mystery.

The panel had admitted that it failed to establish Strunk's motive in supposedly ordering the killing of his wife of 22 years.

But the panel said uncovering the motive of the killing that shocked the nation would be established during the trial.

The NBI and the Philippine National Police had claimed that Strunk had reason to want Blanca dead.

The PNP Task Force Marsha—named after Blanca's long-running TV sitcom "John en Marsha"—originally filed the case with the DOJ in November 2001, but the case was remanded back to it for further investigation.

It was the NBI, along with the PNP, that re-implicated Strunk and Medel in the Blanca murder in July last year.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco charged Strunk with parricide, and Medel, with murder.

Later, the NBI amended the charge of parricide "owing to the fact that the marriage between Blanca and Strunk in the United States is void under Philippine laws," said the DOJ.

The Philippines formally sought Strunk's extradition in February, after the Pasig RTC issued an arrest warrant against him.

Diaz said the request was forwarded to the US justice department, which then asked a California court to issue a warrant of arrest.

According to Diaz, the issuance of that warrant "means that [the Americans] already found probable cause against Strunk." *With reports from Leah Salterio, AP*

PDI PHOTO

DRESSED like a movie star, Nida Blanca was one of the country's most loved in her over 50 years of performing on stage, in the movies and television.

June 12 not a holiday …

From page A1

In Proclamation No. 373, Malacañang justified the transfer of the traditional June 12 holiday to June 13.

It said having the holiday on June 13 would "enable our countrymen to avail of the benefits of a longer weekend."

On Aug. 4, 1964, President Diosdado Macapagal declared June 12 as Independence Day as "the American celebration dwarfed that of the Philippines," said Mr. Macapagal in a speech. "As if to compound the irony, July 4 seemed tantamount to the celebration of Philippine subjection to and dependence on the United states," Mr. Macapagal added.

On the other hand, he noted that a June 12 observance "would be a greater inspiration to the youth who would consequently recall the heroes of the revolution against Spain and their acts of sublime heroism and martyrdom..."

Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed to the whole world the independence of Filipinos from Spanish rule on June 12, 1898 when the national anthem and the Filipino flag were played and displayed in Kawit, Cavite.

A grateful Aguinaldo was the guest of honor the first time the country observed Independence Day on June 12.

Historical significance

But the Palace stressed that the "historical significance of Independence Day (on June 12) is maintained.

"All activities and celebrations for the historical milestones in observance of Independence Day shall remain to be observed on June 12, Thursday."

Malacañang has also decreed that Oct. 31, the eve of All Saints Day, will be a special non-working day for the public sector. *With a report from Dona Pazzibugan*

Why Edong wants Danding to run for president in 2004

EDGARDO ANGARA lists down the many reasons why he wants the LDP to go for Eduardo Cojuangco. PDI PHOTO

From page A1

cent of (the ruling party) Lakas."

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla had been asking Angara if the LDP was still an opposition party because Angara had agreed to forge a government of national unity with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Angara said he would not be bothered if the administration also went for Cojuangco.

Grand coalition

"That's what I'm saying. The traditional borders separating the administration and the opposition in this case will be already blurred or erased because there is no administration candidate. The incumbent is not running and the test now is who can command a larger alliance or network or organization. Whoever he is, that organization will be the dominant political party," Angara said.

"And I feel that Danding is the only person now in a position strong enough to attract various political parties to his banner," he said. He added that Cojuangco could mobilize a "grand coalition or alliance" that would have the biggest chances of winning in 2004. He said the mega alliance could include Lakas, LDP, NPC and Liberal Party.

If this happens, it will be the first time in Philippine history, according to Angara.

"Yes, because this is the first time that the incumbent, who is qualified to run, has disavowed her intention to run. So this is really a unique situation. This may be the one and only instance in our political history. So I'm not bothered by the fact that some in the administration will be supporting his candidacy. That doesn't destroy the fact that he leads the dominant organization or alliance," Angara said.

Three-way fight

Angara sees a three-way fight between three "serious contenders"—Cojuangco, former Education Secretary Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

"But there is a high likelihood that if Danding announces (that he will run), Senator Lacson may just withdraw in his favor," Angara said.

With Lacson out, it won't be a one-on-one fight between Cojuangco and Roco, according to Angara. He said other groups may launch the presidential bids of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr.

FPJ

If Cojuangco runs, then action star Fernando Poe Jr. will not join the fray, according to Angara. "FPJ is the No. 1 model (product endorser) of San Miguel," he said.

A ranking opposition leader earlier told the INQUIRER that FPJ had stated he would run "only if" Ms Macapagal runs.

"He cannot forget what they did to his *compadre* (Estrada) so he is out for revenge," the opposition leader said.

Some LDP members are pushing for Angara to run for president but Angara said he was not going for it for "many personal and political reasons."

"I'll be a hypocrite to say that I didn't pine for the presidency and I tried to seek it because of what I thought I'll be capable of giving of myself. But our people have a different set of criteria for choosing our top leader, and so that's the reality," Angara said.

"Personally, I think I've already achieved much in the 25 years I've been in public service," he said, noting that he'd been president of the University of the Philippines, the Philippine Bar and the Senate.

"Modesty aside, all the major reform bills in education, health, arts and culture, agriculture, were my work. So if one is thinking of his legacy I think I have built a body of work that I can call my legacy. The only office that I have not really attained is the presidency but I'd been executive secretary, secretary of agriculture, and I've some recognition internationally," he said.

"Even if I quit public service now I'll have no regrets," Angara said.

Marcos 'son' sentenced to 12 years in jail by US court

From page A1

"The Buzz" in mid-2001, De Leon had described living a luxurious life with Del Carmen, including shopping sprees in Gucci and Prada, being gifted a Mercedes Benz car and taking a helicopter ride from a New York airport to a helipad in Manhattan.

Del Carmen was arrested in New York in April 2001 after he allegedly tried to sell to an undercover agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation a fake $20-million share of an $800-million gold certificate. The certificate, purportedly issued by the Union Bank of Switzerland, said Del Carmen owned about 3,500 metric tons of gold.

During one meeting, Del Carmen reportedly showed the agent a pair of gold dog tags he claimed gave him access to the Swiss bank's vault, which housed the gold he supposedly owned.

Prosecutors said that among problems with Del Carmen's claims, one stood out. The bank vault was incapable of housing that much gold because its floor would collapse under such heavy weight.

Living it up

Using his Marcos alias, Del Carmen claimed that as the late dictator's first-born son he inherited a large fortune, supposedly including billions of dollars in gold and over $5 trillion in US Federal Reserve notes.

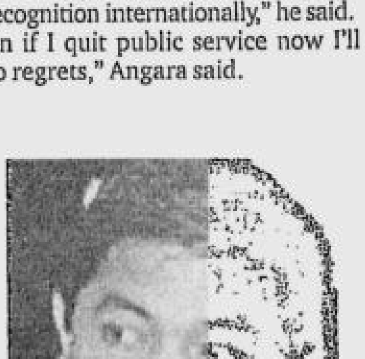
Del Carmen, who said his funds were tied up in gold certificates, ran up more than $500,000 in debt, including a $200,000 bill at Hong Kong's Hyatt Regency, where he had lived in its presidential suite. As collateral for his outstanding debt, he gave a bogus gold certificate

In September 2002, Del Carmen pleaded guilty before the Manhattan federal court to one count of conspiracy, two counts of securities fraud and one count of unlawful possession of a weapon.

At the time, he claimed to be 60 years old, but prosecutors said that was untrue.

Del Carmen is also wanted in Hong Kong over an alleged international plot to obtain credit using $148 billion in fake US notes.

With a report from Reuters



EDILBERTO MARCOS: Goodbye to the days of wine and roses and to Angelu de Leon. FILE PHOTO

3rd OFW killed in Saudi suicide bombings

From page A1

with her husband on the phone was Sunday night, and "he was complaining about their delayed salary" at the plant where he worked for the past 12 years.

Now she has only memories of the man she described as a tender husband and good father.

"When he was home for a vacation, he made up for the time that he was not here by being extra-sweet to all us, especially when he was a little bit tipsy," Salvacion told the Inquirer in a phone interview. "*Nangungulit siya, naglalambing*. For us, his family, he was a model husband and father. We will surely miss him."

Salvacion said Rogelio had no vice, "except for a few bottles of beer when his friends dropped in for a visit" at their home in Barangay Lagyo, Gumaca, Quezon, about five hours away from Manila.

She said her husband completed only grade school but that this lack of higher education did not prevent him from having friends from all walks of life.

"He was a very sociable person," she said. "He was fond of comedy movies."

Unforeseeable

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the Philippine government could not do anything to protect Filipinos abroad from terrorist attacks.

"These are the kinds of things that we cannot foresee," she said in a phone interview. "No amount of intelligence can predict terrorist activities."

Sto. Tomas said OFWs, particularly those employed by American firms, would just have to be alert and aware of what was happening around them.

"They're being asked (by the Philippine Embassy) to be alert and vigilant," she said.

Labor officials also said Filipinos abroad should get updates "every now and then" from the embassy for their own protection.

The Owwa's Angelo said employees of American and Arab-American firms living in the bombed quarters had been transferred to a residential site also in Riyadh.

The US Embassy has asked American firms who are targets of terrorist attacks to move their operations and employees to residential areas.

Angelo said that while there was a potential threat of new suicide bombings, reports from Philippine labor and embassy officials in Saudi Arabia had shown that it was "business as usual" in the kingdom.

But OFWs have been asked to register with the Philippine Embassy their exact location, contact numbers, and employers' names, if these had changed.

"It's important to tell the embassy people where they are so that if they need help, they can be easily identified and located," Angelo said.

Angelo also said the families of Pababero, Templo and Hernandez would receive P50,000 in insurance and P20,000 in burial benefits from the Owwa. Members of the Social Security System will get additional burial benefits.

At least 15 other Filipinos living in the American quarters were hurt, but only five remain in hospital. The rest are stable, according to the Department of Labor and Employment.

Ironic

Salvacion Pababero said they learned of Rogelio's death through an overseas call from one of his co-workers.

She said she was selling fish at the town market when two of her children came to take her home.

"It was not the government that broke the news to us," she said.

And to add irony to the situation, she recalled that when they made a long-distance call to the Owwa office in Manila late Tuesday afternoon to inquire, "no one there knew about the tragedy that befell my husband, and the Owwa staff only learned from us what had happened."

Salvacion said Rogelio left for the Middle East in July last year after spending two months on vacation here with his family.

"He was tired of working abroad, and would often tell us this during his last vacation," she recalled.

But because there was no money left in their savings account, Rogelio again signed a work contract.

"He just wanted to collect his retirement pay, which could have reached more than P200,000, based on his estimate," the widow said, her voice quivering. "From that money, we could probably start a small store to make a decent living. But with what happened, only God knows where this will lead us."

Salvacion said her husband's earnings had provided them a modest house and saw all their children through school.

"He was a regular fisherman here before he went to Saudi—sometimes with catch, sometimes without," she said. "But in his desire to give his family a decent life, he tried his luck in Metro Manila doing all sorts of decent jobs—until he landed his first overseas contract in Brunei."

In a radio interview, the Pababeros' eldest daughter Beth Pababero-Velasco said her father just wanted to save enough capital to start a business at home.

She said her father did not show any premonition that tragedy would strike.

Attentive

Minerva Hernandez, Rogelio's younger sister and a grade-school teacher in Guinyangan town, wept as she remembered him.

She said Rogelio was the eldest in the brood of eight.

"He gave all of us equal attention. All of us always had token gifts from him every time he came home. I have accumulated lots of personal gifts from him," she told the Inquirer.

"The last time we talked was when he visited me in Guinyangan last May. He just told me to take care."

GMA vows justice for Filipinos killed, injured in blasts

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday vowed justice for the Filipinos killed and injured in the bomb attacks on expatriate housing compounds in Riyadh.

"We will not relent in this campaign until we achieve justice for the victims of senseless murder," she said in a speech during the commencement exercises of the AMA Computer University at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City.

She also said the Philippine Embassy would "work closely with Saudi authorities in Riyadh to get at the root of this incident and obtain justice for the victims."

A staunch supporter of US President George W. Bush's war against terror since the attacks in New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, the President said the bomb attacks in Riyadh was "a risk we carry for being part of the global coalition against terrorism."

"The world has known for long time that the tentacles of terrorism stretch across borders and can only be destroyed by international action," she said.

The President also pointed out that having Filipino casualties in terrorist attacks around the world was "a risk inherent to the deployment of millions of Filipinos worldwide."

Expressing her sympathy for the families of those killed, she said the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration would see to their welfare.

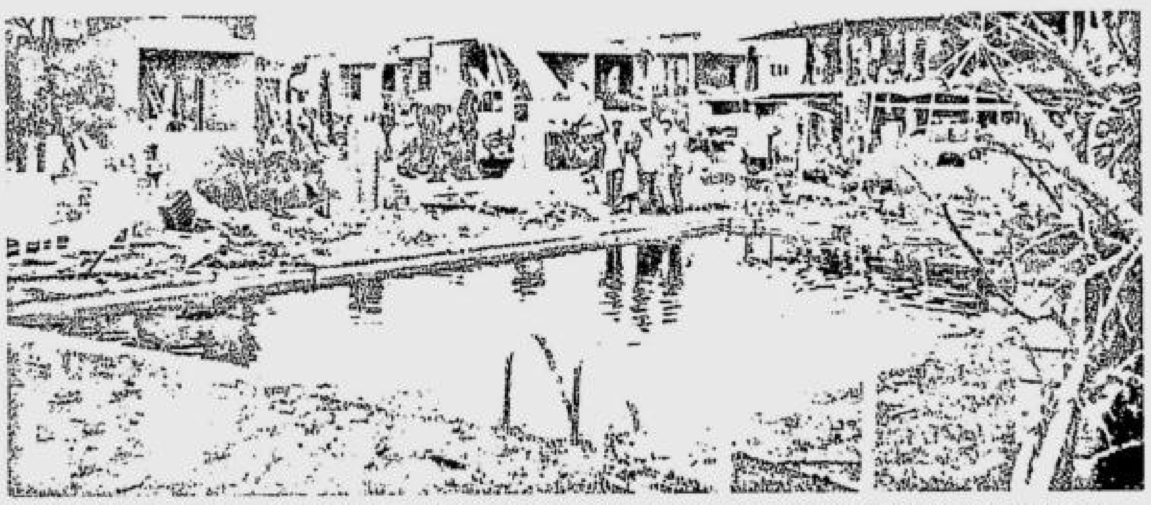
"This tragedy shows the utter helplessness of civilians against the agents of terror," the President said. "We are experiencing this in our own country, where we are now thick in a punitive campaign against terrorists in Mindanao."

She did not name the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, but it was evident that Ms Macapagal was referring to recent bombings and attacks attributed to the secessionist group.

The President's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said in his regular media briefing yesterday that the government would make provisions for the repatriation of Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia "if necessary."

FBI to join hunt for al-Qaida blast masterminds

From page A1



DAMAGE done to the compound housing mostly expatriates in a suburb of Riyadh is incalculable as the first major terrorist strike since the US-led war on Iraq. REUTERS

tacks on America that prompted a US-led-war on Afghanistan to try to root out the terrorist organization.

The British Foreign Office said there was a "high threat" of further attacks against Western interests in Saudi Arabia, possibly involving chemical or biological weapons. It said two of its citizens were missing and 15 were injured.

A US diplomat in Riyadh said the embassy would lay on evacuation flights for any of the 40,000 or so Americans living in the kingdom, the world's largest oil exporter.

The US state department also told dependents and non-essential staff at the US missions in the kingdom to leave.

War on terror continues

Bush vowed to capture the perpetrators. "These despicable acts were committed by killers whose only faith is hate, and the United States will find the killers," he said. "The war on terror continues."

The bombings were carried out just hours before a scheduled visit by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who is on a Middle East tour to explain US policy after the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and is now in Moscow.

The attacks unleashed a flood of fury against al-Qaida in the ultra-conservative birthplace of Islam where the militant network has many sympathizers.

While many Saudis are angry at the United States for the war on Iraq and its policies in the region, many of them also said innocent expatriates living in their country did not deserve this.

Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Abdullah, denounced the attacks as un-Islamic and vowed they would not destabilize the kingdom, where there have been several anti-Western attacks in recent years.

"The terrorists are criminals, butchers and devoid of all Islamic and humane principles," he said in a televised address.

Interior Minister Prince Nayef said Saudi authorities believed the 19 al-Qaida suspects were taking orders directly from Bin Laden.

"This is life, and incidents occur in every country and we are in a period of anxiety and terror acts. The kingdom is one of the countries being targeted," he told the Saudi newspaper Okaz.

Just 30 seconds

On Monday night, it took the bombers just 30 seconds to a minute to get through an iron gate, drive up to the building and detonate explosives, according to a US official accompanying US Secretary of State Collin Powell.

After killing the sentries, the bombers pushed the button that opened the iron gate to the compound. *(Story below.)*

"They had to know where the switches were," said the official, suggesting the terrorists had inside information.

The al-Hamra, Jadawal and Vinnell compounds—all within 16 km of each other in northeastern Riyadh, the last two a half-kilometer apart—house business executives, oil industry professionals and teachers.

At around 11:30 p.m. Monday, witnesses reported, there was gunfire and a series of explosions.

The blasts were "absolutely terrifying," one Scottish survivor, John Gardiner, told the British Broadcasting Corp.

"All the doors came in, the external doors, the internal doors, all the windows, and the next thing I knew I was lying on my back in shattered glass," he said.

Facades of five- and four- story buildings were sheared off, revealing apartment interiors, their contents swept out by the blasts.

One explosion near al-Hamra's recreation facility left a crater 6 meters across. Several cars and six or seven single-family homes within 45 meters of the blast were destroyed and debris—shredded, charred shreds of cars and furniture, melted patio chairs, uprooted palm trees—was scattered another 27 meters.

Residents sifted through debris for their belongings on Tuesday and packed up to move.

"I hope those people who were responsible for these acts face the full weight of the law, and if they are men of religion, that when they depart this world that they are punished in the next world, too," said al-Hamra resident Graham Bull, a teacher at the British School who suffered minor injuries.

Police vehicles, lights flashing, patrolled the walls of the compounds and kept reporters out.

In a televised address to his people, Crown Prince Abdullah, quoting from the Koran, said "hellfire" awaited the attackers.

Seven Saudis were listed among the dead, including Mohammed Abdullah al-Blaihed, a son of Riyadh Deputy Governor Abdullah al-Blaihed. The elder al-Blaihed owned the al-Hamra compound.

Saudi Arabia has a large population of expatriate workers, including about 35,000 Americans.

There had been indications that a terrorist attack might be imminent. A counterterrorism official in Washington said information from the past two weeks indicated al-Qaida had been planning a strike in Saudi Arabia.

Earlier this month, the US state department advised Americans to avoid travel to Saudi Arabia because of increased terrorism concerns.

In a series of e-mails on the weekend, a man who claimed to head an al-Qaida training camp, Abu Mohammed Al-Ablaj, or Mullah Seif el Din, told the Arabic weekly Al Majalla that the group was planning an attack in the Persian Gulf using weapons and ammunition stored there. *Reports by Reuters and AP*

US confusion . . .

From page A1

likely be closer to the original Saudi number of 29 but stressed that they believed that was low.

"It's definitely going to be higher than 29," a second official said.

Many of those unaccounted for are believed to be Filipino nationals, and the officials said the final toll would depend on how many of them were in their residences when the attacks occurred.

Confusion over the death toll would explain why the three-star Inquirer final edition, which is distributed in Metro Manila, carried the AFP report of about 90 fatalities. The one-star edition for northern Luzon and Bicol as well as the two-star edition for Visayas and Mindanao used the early Saudi figure of 20 dead, which did not include the nine suicide bombers.

As the Inquirer final edition was rolling off the press at about 1 a.m. Wednesday, however, AFP came out with a clarification that US state department officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, had found their preliminary death toll of 91 a bit too high.

"We're hearing now that the 91 figure is high," one US official said. "The Saudi figure is a good ballpark number for the moment, but as they go through the rubble we'll be in a better position to know."

"We believe it could be at least 40 and possibly 50," said another US official, who stressed that the range was an estimate and that an exact toll of dead and wounded was still being determined by Saudi officials.

Cheney's remarks

Adding to the confusion was US Vice President Dick Cheney, who cited the US state department's higher body count to emphasize that the war on terror was far from over.

"Lest any of us think this struggle is over with, all we have to do is contemplate last night's tragic events in Riyadh where some 91 people were killed," Cheney told an audience at the Hudson Institute as he gave an introduction for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Cheney did not give an explanation of how he came to this much higher figure. It was also unclear from his speech whether he was repeating unconfirmed news reports or whether his information was from official estimates.

A US official said after the vice president's remarks that Cheney was merely repeating news reports. "He was referring to news accounts," said the official.

Too early to tell

Philip Reeker, deputy state department spokesperson, said at least seven US citizens had been confirmed killed in the blasts. But he would not hazard a guess on the total death toll, saying it was too early to do so.

"Ninety-one is a number that has been out there . . . It's one of the reports; it indicates the severity of this attack," he told reporters.

"(But) getting an accurate number of victims is going to be difficult in the early stages of this," Reeker said. "We have to go through information about who was present at these facilities that were attacked, recovery of remains and making estimates of those presumed missing."

The Saudi interior ministry said at least 29 people were killed; including nine bombers and seven Americans. It said at least 194 were injured in the blasts.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who flew into Riyadh as part of a Middle East tour and paid a visit to the site of one attack, said at least 10 Americans were feared dead and that many other foreigners had been killed.

Shortly after he spoke, the Saudi interior ministry announced its toll that said the dead included seven Saudis, seven Americans, two Jordanian children, two Filipinos, a Lebanese and a Swiss national, in addition to the nine charred bodies believed to be the attackers.

Ten people were killed in the first explosion at the Al-Hamra compound, two at the Al-Jadawel compound and eight at the Vinnell complex, the Saudi interior ministry said in a statement. *AFP*

Attackers penetrated well-defended compound in 30 seconds

RIYADH—US defense and security officials described on Tuesday how a group of men in two vehicles penetrated a well-defended compound on the edge of the Saudi capital Riyadh and blew the front off a four-story building housing US defense contractor employees.

An advance party in a white Ford Crown Victoria sedan led the attack, driving up the approach road and along the perimeter wall, toward the gate where at least four armed men were on duty at about 11:20 p.m. on Monday, they said.

First they fired six shots through the front window of a Saudi military truck posted near the gate, killing one soldier and injuring two, one official said.

"It was late and dark, so the soldiers would not necessarily be suspicious that an American car was approaching," the senior official told reporters.

The attackers then turned on the guard in the sentry box at the gate, killing him and pressing the button which controlled the metal gate and the barrier installed in the roadway.

"It was your typical operation. You kill the guards, you push the button, you let yourself in," one officer said. "All this took 30 seconds to a minute."

Once the gate was open and the path clear, the car pulled aside and let through a Dodge Ram truck loaded with about 200 kg of explosives of the RDX or Semtex type.

The car drove about 100 meter into the compound, turned to the left, drove another 40 meters, then right and up to the edge of the building which housed 70 unaccompanied or bachelor employees of a company, based in Fairfax, Virginia.

"They went for the spot where they do most damage. If they had stopped at the corner the blast would have dissipated down the street," said a senior official.

The blast left a crater about two meters deep and threw the chassis of the truck off the side, where it lay scorched. At least 10 people were killed, including seven Americans, in just one of three attacks that night.

The operation indicated the attackers knew the compound layout and which building had the most inhabitants, but many people could have had such knowledge, the officials said.

Of the 70 men who usually sleep in the building, 50 were out in the desert that night on an exercise with the Saudi military.

"This was a well-planned terrorist attack. Obviously the place had been cased, as had the others," said US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who visited the site.

The compound was run by the Vinnell Corp., a Northrop Grumman company which has operated in Saudi Arabia for 29 years.

It trains the National Guard, a military force separate from the army and commanded by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz, the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia.

The other attacks were similar in style and took place within minutes of the attack on the Vinnell compound—a characteristic of operations by Osama bin Laden's group. *Reuters*

PRESIDENT Macapagal is the guest of honor at the AMA Computer graduation rites at the Araneta Coliseum on Wednesday. Flanking the President from left, Dr. Socorro Rodriguez, VP for academic affairs; Amable Aguiluz V, AMA Computer president; Dr. Allen Fisher, Carnegie Mellon University president and Michael Haigh. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Pa, daughter reunited; GMA close to tears

From page A1

diplomas to their parents.

Ana Marie is from the AMA Makati campus. In her heartwarming speech, she asked her fellow students to stand up and offer their diplomas to their "beloved parents."

She offered hers to her mother who joined her on stage.

Then she added, *"Ako gusto ko i-share ito sa aking tatay pero wala ang aking tatay, nasa Dubai* (I want to share this with my father but he's not here, he's in Dubai)."

She had not seen her father in 18 years.

Unknown to her and her mother and two younger siblings, AMA officials had flown in her father Antonio from the United Arab Emirates to Manila to surprise his daughter on her graduation day. He arrived two days ago.

After her speech, the host Mari Kaimo asked Ana Marie to stay on stage to talk to her father on the phone.

Like most everyone else in the coliseum, she thought her father was talking to her from Dubai.

Her father congratulated her for her "dream come true," and said he wished he were there with her.

All the while that he was talking to his daughter, he walked down the aisle toward the stage. Then the spotlight found him. And a dam of tears broke loose. Ana Marie, her mother and father embraced each other on stage. Her brother and sister joined them.

As the heart-wrenching scene unfolded, the camera focused on the President's face and beamed it on the widescreen. The camera caught her with eyes brimming with unshed tears.

Someone standing said the President apparently fought to keep her tears in check.

President knew

A Malacañang protocol officer told the INQUIRER that the President was briefed beforehand about the whole scenario, including the "surprise" reunion.

But still, she probably did not expect the true-to-life drama to be so moving.

As Ana Marie, her father and mother were walking toward the President on their way down the stage, she stood up and met them halfway.

AMA chair Amable Aguiluz V delivered his speech before Ana Marie delivered hers *(Related story on Page A3)*.

By the time she delivered her commencement address, the President had regained her composure.

Sacrifices of OFWs

She cited the sacrifice of parents like Antonio Liamzon just to get their children into good schools.

Simultaneous AMA graduation rites were held at the Folk Arts Theater, Cebu Grand Convention Center and at the Davao Convention Center.

Pinay says Japanese police pressured her to file rape charges vs US marine

From page A1

The woman told the court she had merely wanted to complain to the US military that Brown had fondled her but instead the case was passed on to the Japanese police because the incident did not take place on a military base, according to the lawyer.

Marine Corps Maj. Michael Brown, 40, was indicted on charges of attempted rape and destroying property and was handed over to Japanese authorities on Dec. 19.

The trial opened in March at the district court in Naha, the capital of Okinawa, 1,600 km south of Tokyo, but Brown did not make any statement.

Brown, based at the US Marines' Camp Courtney in Okinawa, is accused of trying to rape the woman in her car in the early hours of Nov. 2.

His defense said Brown was innocent, but argued that the trial should be handled by a US court because of simmering anti-US sentiment in Okinawa where two-thirds of 47,000 US troops in Japan are stationed.

A string of serious crimes by US military personnel based in Okinawa over the years, including the 1995 gang rape of a 12-year-old girl by three servicemen, has fueled local resentment of the heavy military presence.

Takaesu said the woman had confessed in court that she could understand only 60 percent of what was said in Japanese when she first met local police officers.

It was not immediately clear why Japanese investigators wanted to press charges against the Marine against the woman's wishes. No comment was available from the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office.

Kyodo News agency quoted Hiroyuki Kawami, deputy head of the prosecutors office, as saying Tuesday: "It is inconceivable that an indictment would be made that ignored the wishes of the victim. We want to clarify the intent of her remarks in court."

AFP

Session Road goes to pot

From page A1

rounded by policemen and uprooted on Wednesday.

It was no ordinary weed. It was the "real thing," a marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*) whose cultivation (regardless of quantity) carries a punishment of life imprisonment to death and a fine of up to P10 million under Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

This may be the first time that marijuana was found in one of the busiest parts of the Cordillera. The street price of dried marijuana leaves in Baguio is P500 per kilogram. In Metro Manila, it's at least P3,000.

The marijuana plant found on Session Road would have fetched a measly P20, but it cost the city a lot of embarrassment, officials said.

The plant was hidden among a huge ornamental tea shrub and flowers whose leaves resemble the marijuana plant. The weed grew or was planted on the fifth flower box on the left side of the pedestrian crossing facing the old Session Theater.

How it got there is anybody's guess.

Carlo Calalo, a parking attendant of Jadewell Corp. in charge of the area in front of the flower box, said he did not realize until Wednesday that a marijuana plant was growing right there. Ray, a cigarette vendor who frequents the area, said he did not seem to notice the plant.

But a sharp eye may have noticed the marijuana growing in a corner of the concrete flower box.

A report from the Baguio City Police Office's Station 7, which has jurisdiction over the city's main thoroughfare, said "unscrupulous and unaware persons dropped marijuana seeds (in the flower box), which grew up due to soil fertility and favorable climate."

Supt. Ernesto Daytec, BCPO Station 7 chief, uprooted the plant before a BCPO photographer and took it to the station for safekeeping.

P1-B worth of marijuana

Last year, more than P1-billion worth of marijuana was seized and uprooted in the Cordillera, according to reports from the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in the Cordillera and the regional police.

In its 2002 accomplishment report, the PDEA Cordillera reported seizing and burning more than 1.5 million fully grown marijuana plants, 153,700 marijuana seedlings and 5,500 dried marijuana leaves.

The value of marijuana seized last year was much smaller than those seized the past years, which sometimes reached P5 billion annually, according to police reports.

PDEA officials said lack of personnel and funds hampered their "seize-and-destroy" missions in the region.

In the past, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency funded operations of PDEA's forerunner, the Narcotics Command of the Philippine National Police.

Most marijuana plantations are found in Kapangan and Buguias towns in Benguet, Tinoc town in Ifugao, and in the areas around the 2,029-meter Mt. Chumanchil in Kalinga, according to PDEA officials.

These areas can only be reached after several days of hiking. Using helicopters is limited because the trip costs the police P50,000 an hour.

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Hotel Veniz, Baguio	Filipino or American breakfast for 4 Plated dinner for 4 Complimentary 1 hour boat ride for 4 at Burnham Park	Duka Bay, Cagayan de Oro	Set breakfast for 4 Free 1 hour use of kayak
Villa de Oro, Boracay	American breakfast for 4 Set dinner for 4 Boat transfers Sunset cruise Complimentary use of billiard facilities for 2 hours	Punta Bulata, Negros Occidental	Set breakfast and dinner for 4 Complimentary use of ocean kayak for 1 hour
Bohol Beach Club	Set Breakfast for 4 Round trip transfers from/to airport or pier Complimentary glass bottom boat ride for 20 minutes	Lakawon Island, Cadiz	Set breakfast and dinner for 4 Round trip boat transfers Banana boat ride

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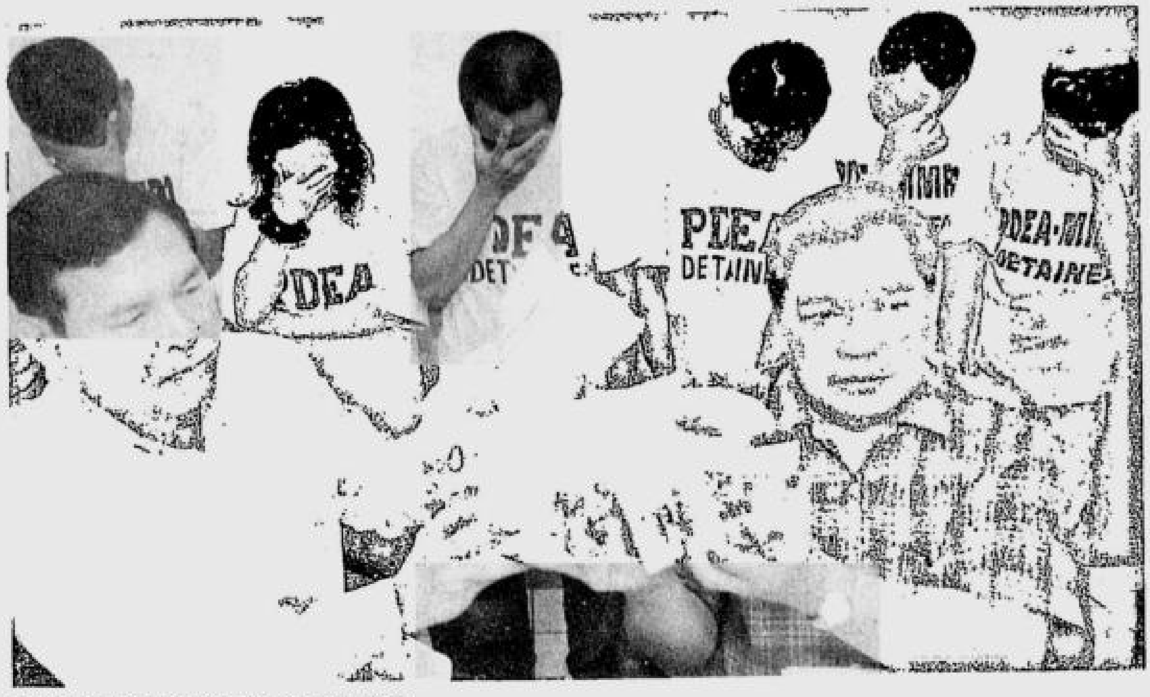


SUSPECTED DRUG DEALERS
Suspected drug dealers cover their faces as Interior Secretary Joey Lina (right) and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Director General Anselmo Avenido Jr. present them to media people as well as the shabu seized from the suspects during a press conference at Camp Crame Wednesday. JOAN BONDOC

Pyramid scam suspects to pay back investors

By Christine Avendaño

TWO OF the biggest suspected pyramid scam operators yesterday said they are now consolidating their assets to pay back their investors.

That's why Rose Baladjay of Multitel Corp., and Erin Mateo of the Mateo Management Group sought for an executive session with senators investigating the pyramid scam.

Baladjay and Mateo made their request in yesterday's hearing of the Senate committee on trade and commerce chaired by Sen. Robert Jaworski.

Baladjay said she has authorized her lawyer to meet with the committee members.

"I am willing to face my obligations," she said during the hearing.

Jaworski, who chairs the committee, told Baladjay and Mateo that his committee would hold an executive session with them separately.

Baladjay is said to be behind a P20 billion pyramid scam with more than one million investors.

Mateo, on the other hand, is allegedly behind another pyramid scam involving more than P193 million and $6 million from 950 investors.

"It's a welcome development, but I want to see it before I believe it," Jaworski later said, in reaction to Baladjay's pledge that she intends to pay back her investors.

During yesterday's continuation of the committee's hearings on pyramid scam businesses, Baladjay was excused from testifying anew after she told Jaworski that she was sick and had medical certificates to prove it.

Baladjay, who is detained at the Makati City Jail, said her doctors had advised her to have medical tests. She did not say what her ailment was.

Mateo, for his part, said that he was working on the rehabilitation of his businesses so he could pay back legitimate investors.

Mateo, who is detained at the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigative and Detection Group, told the committee that his consolidated properties and assets are not enough to pay back his investors.

Also yesterday, Jaworski asked the Department of Justice on whether a reward can be put up for people who can give information on the whereabouts of other suspected pyramid scam operators.

This came after Ferdinand Lavine, chief of the anti-organized crime division of the National Bureau of Investigation, told the committee that his agents had failed to locate other suspected pyramid scam operators despite the leads given them.

Among the suspects the NBI are hunting are Evelyn Mateo of MMG and Renato Sinanggote of Rise-E Commerce.

Jaworski suggested a P1 million reward money for informers.

Hunt for Cardeño brazen, says Adaza

By Christian V. Esguerra

HOW MANY more will you kill?

The lawyer of Supt. Rafael Cardeño yesterday posed this question, describing as brazen Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto's hunt for the alleged mastermind of the Baron Cervantes murder.

Homobono Adaza said Maganto and his men could not just kill with impunity civilians like Bejamin Bagulbagul, 49, and possibly, Cardeño himself, in the course of the manhunt.

"He can't just go on firing his gun and killing people," the lawyer said. "He's supposed to be an officer of the law, not a lawless enforcer of the law. The (police) hierarchy should censure his lawless actions."

Adaza was incensed by Maganto's pronouncement that he would get "dead or alive" Cardeño and fellow fugitive Santiago "Sonny" Camacho.

On Monday night, Maganto claimed his men almost got the fugitives when they stormed a shack in Famy, Laguna. The violent search yielded no suspect but killed Bagulbagul, the house owner who had shot dead SPO1 Apolinario Jimenez, head of the raiding team.

Seized from Bagulbagul, a former barangay councilman allegedly with a string of criminal cases in Laguna, were a .38-caliber revolver and a .45-caliber pistol, the police general said.

Getting Cardeño and Camacho "dead or alive," Maganto explained, is authorized by the police's rules of engagement.

"We won't shoot at them upon sighting, of course," he said. "But I can issue a shoot-to-kill order during encounter. That means they should never resist arrest."

Angered by the death of Jimenez, Maganto added: "I would not hesitate to shoot criminals if they kill another one of my men."

Canossa '78 silver jubilee

BATCH '78 of Canossa Academy-Lipa will hold their silver jubilee celebration this Sunday at Club Victorina, Baseview Homes in Banay-Banay, Lipa City.

Registration starts at 10:30 a.m. For details, call Marilou Estoesta-Samonte at 0917-7949-616, or Nelanie Ureta-Melendres at 0917-6669120, or Marichel Linatoc-Katigbak at (43) 757-0100.

Knapsack left inside church had dead baby

"HOW could a mother do this to her child?"

This was the question posed on Mother's Day by Marikina police investigator PO1 Rey Candelaria after learning that a dead baby boy was found in the lobby of a Catholic church.

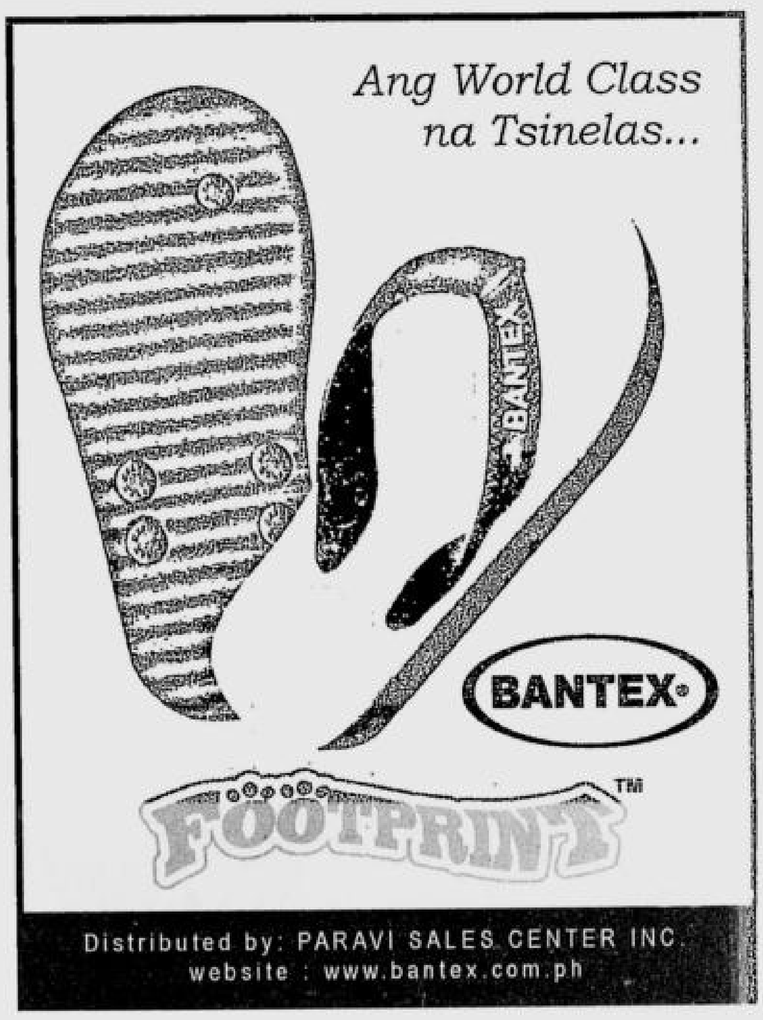
The body was wrapped in a white cloth and stuffed inside a blue nylon knapsack placed near the candle stand, apparently to ensure its immediate discovery, he said.

Candelaria said the police station received a telephone call at about 8:30 a.m. from churchgoers of the San Antonio de Padua Parish Church in Calumpang who noticed the presence of an unattended knapsack.

He said investigators who were sent to the site found the bag and were shocked to find the body.

"The find initially caused anxiety among the churchgoers. Their anxiety turned into a mixed emotion of rage, dismay and pity for the baby after they learned what was in the knapsack," Candelaria said.

The remains of the baby were turned over to the officials of the Himlayang Bayan for proper disposition. Police are continuing their investigation of the incident. *Nelson F. Flores*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METROBRIEFS

Pa, son attacked in QC

ARTEMOR Arellano, 65, was killed while his son, Arfy, 26, was seriously injured when their drinking partner attacked the victims outside their house in Carmel 5, Tandang Sora, Quezon City Tuesday night. PO2 Rommel Merino said the Arellanos had just finished drinking with their friends at around 10:30 p.m. when William Sinco, 30, appeared armed with a bladed weapon. Without warning, the suspect attacked the victims and escaped. Neighbors of the victims took the two to the hospital, where the elder Arellano was declared dead, police said. *Alcuin Papa*

NBI seizes hot plates

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation agents seized in Valenzuela more than P600,000 worth of stolen steel plates from Romania. NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco identified the suspects as Lani Manaois, Maysan Steel manager, of Valenzuela City, driver Glenn O. Arcega, of Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City, and three John Does. The NBI said the suspects hijacked the shipment on May 3, shortly after the plates arrived at the Port Area in Manila. Investigators later learned that the plates were taken to the Neria Compound, in front of the Maysan Steel office on Maysan Road. A security guard told NBI agents that the truck containing the hijacked plates were "accommodated" inside the compound on Manaois' order. *Philip Tubeza*

Girl drowns in Novaliches

A WEDDING celebration turned tragic when 11-year-old Camille Domingo of Balintawak, Quezon City, drowned in a swimming pool located near a cemetery in Novaliches, Quezon City, on Tuesday. Residents of the Aquirre Compound, located near Holy Cross Cemetery, in San Bartolome, told police that this was not the first time a child drowned in the private pool. SPO4 Marcellino Castillo said Domingo, who was with her parents to celebrate the wedding of her uncle at the compound, wandered into the deep end of the swimming pool and drowned at around 7:30 p.m. *Alcuin Papa*

Man stabs wife on East Ave.

GERRY Gampong, 29, allegedly stabbed his wife in Quezon City on Tuesday night when she refused to go with him to Maguindanao. The victim, Ging-Ging Sola, 25, a resident of Barangay Gulod, Novaliches, is now in critical condition at the East Avenue Medical Center. PO3 Antonio Torente said the suspect had been trying to persuade his wife to go with him to his home in Sultan Kudarat. Gampong went to the East Avenue hospital at around 10:30 p.m. to persuade his wife to leave with him. But for the third time, she refused. Upset, Gampong pulled out a bladed weapon and stabbed the woman. *Alcuin Papa*

Singer April Boy loses van to thieves

By Nelson F. Flores

APRIL BOY

ACTOR singer April "Boy" Regino lost his van last Tuesday to car thieves in Marikina City.

The 37-year-old actor singer who popularized the aptly titled song "Kung Mawawala Ka" said his green and silver Nissan Vanette van with registration plates UFN 207 was stolen between 3 a.m and 11 a.m. while parked in front of his house at 132 M. H. Del Pilar St., Barangay Calumpang, Marikina City.

Jose De Leon, Regino's personal secretary, said they were surprised to find the van missing, adding he had no idea who would take interest in the van since it was already an old vehicle.

Police are still investigating the incident even as they noted that stolen old vehicles are often used in crimes like bank robbery.

They also noted an increase in scooter theft in the city's public areas.

Petron ordered: Pay P10M in back taxes

A MALABON City court yesterday ordered a Petron Corp. bulk plant in the Navotas Fish Port Complex to pay the Navotas municipal government P10.2 million in back taxes.

The court's order prompted Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco to give the bulk plant 48 hours—or until today—to pay the amount.

The bulk plant supplies fuel to fishing vessels in the port

The Navotas government filed a case after Petron failed to pay P10,204,916.17 in business taxes from 1998 to 2002.

Petron questioned the authority of Navotas to collect taxes from them, saying the Local Government Code bans municipal governments from collecting taxes on fuel products.

But Malabon City Regional Trial Court Judge Rosa Reyes ruled that what Petron should pay is not taxes on its products but business tax based on holding business in the city. *Tina Santos*

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5 12 19 20 28 32

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

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Get a sizzling, hot

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BAYO
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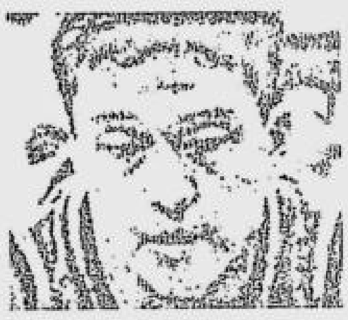

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But a shootout erupted between the guards and the suspects. Two guards, identified as Erol Gozon and a certain Nonado, were hit in the exchange and were taken to the A. Delos Santos Hospital for treatment, Alvarez said.

"It all happened very fast," said Alvarez, still shaken from the experience. "I had to duck to avoid getting hit. And there were a lot of them (suspects), all carrying long firearms of high-caliber."

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At press time, police are still scouring the vicinity, hoping to catch up with the suspects.

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The victim now claims that she is carrying the baby of one of her abusers.

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She said they all happened in the precinct located at the Baseco Compound.

Insp. Arturo Paglinawan of the Western Police District said he doubted the charges. But he said he would still summon the suspects to get their side.

The suspects have already been disarmed, he added.

Investigators yesterday sent the vendor to the hospital for medico-legal and psychiatrict test.

The suspects claim that the complainant is mentally deranged.

They added that she had two children by her own brother and that she had even admitted that she had sex with men for a fee.

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Abunales said the haul was the biggest since he assumed office five months ago.

The contraband, which was later sent to the National Bureau of Investigation, was contained in 4 big plastic bags, 11 medium-sized bags and 8 sachets, he said.

Crisostomo was tight-lipped during interrogation, but prison officials believe he was working for a syndicate dealing in illegal substances at the NBP.

"Drugs can't just enter the compound without the involvement of moneyed and influential inmates," Abunales told the INQUIRER. "This is what we're trying to find out."

Crisostomo was moved from his cell at Building 3D-1 to the disciplinary chamber.

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Without warning, one of the three quarry employees shot Daniel's companion, Chris Entoy, 13, in the head. Chris fell to the ground with two bullets in the head. Luckily, he has survived.

But Daniel was taken captive and hung upside down. His hands were tied up while his feet were tied with a rope attached to a beam.

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Daniel remained hanging upside down from 1 p.m. until the wee hours of the morning the following day. While he was in that very uncomfortable position, two men kept beating him up.

One of the three torturers was a woman, Menchie Esguerra, caretaker at the quarry site. The other alleged torturers were Rolando Matola and Ernesto Alvarez.

While Danny was allegedly being tortured by Matola and Alvarez, Esguerra kept on laughing in glee, according to Daniel.

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After many hours of inflicting pain on the boy, one of the men stabbed Danny in the neck.

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F&E Quarry and Trucking Services continues to hide Esguerra, Matola and Alvarez. It has hired the services of a law firm to defend the three should the two boys, Daniel and Chris, file cases in court.

The law firm of Barcelona, Barcelona and Magdamit has written this writer that all queries about the three should be addressed to it.

Daniel and Chris' parents are too poor to hire the services of a lawyer.

* * *

As expected, Supt. Elnora Bernardino, former Palawan police director, did not attend her arraignment at the regional trial court in Puerto Princesa last Tuesday, May 13, where she's charged with violating the Omnibus Election Code.

Bernardino is charged with providing guns to some goons of a political candidate she favored a couple of years ago. The case has been pending for years at the regional trial court. The trial cannot start without her being arraigned.

The court has issued a warrant for Bernardino's arrest, but she has yet to be taken in.

* * *

If the judge, Nelia Fernandez, doesn't know how to go about arresting her, I suggest she try sending the arrest warrant to Director Jose Lalisan Jr., directorate for personnel and management, Camp Crame, Quezon City.

By the way, why is it that the administrative case against Bernardino has been pending with the Philippine National Police for a long time?

In addition to the criminal case, Bernardino is facing an administrative case from grave misconduct.

Now I know the extent of power and influence the Iglesia ni Cristo has over the courts, as well as the PNP. Bernardino is a member of this religious sect.

* * *

A board member at the Land Transportation, Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) is being accused by a consortium of insurance companies of harassment.

The board member is reportedly preventing the members of the consortium from setting up booths inside the LTFRB premises which has been the practice for a long time.

The consortium says the board member is doing that because after the consortium refused his demand that they give him a monthly retainer.

The insurance consortium says Dante Lantin, the LTFRB chair, is not being alluded to. There are three members of the LTFRB, one of whom is Lantin.

* * *

Despite the people's close guarding of the forests in Palawan against illegal logging, some unscrupulous groups still manage to cut down trees in the province's virgin forests.

Recently, forest rangers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Palawan seized about 24,000 board feet of flitches from a motor launch bound for Malaysia.

The flitches came from trees cut down in the forest of Bataraza town, according to Raymundo Crisostomo, Palawan DENR chief.

"No matter how hard we guard the forests here, Mon, some people still try to engage in illegal logging. That's because illegal logging is profitable," said Crisostomo.

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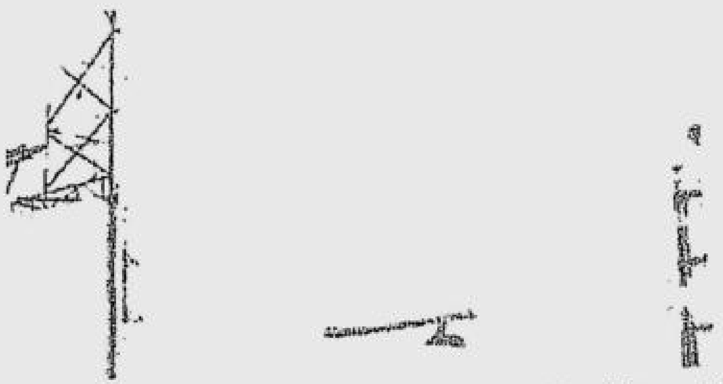

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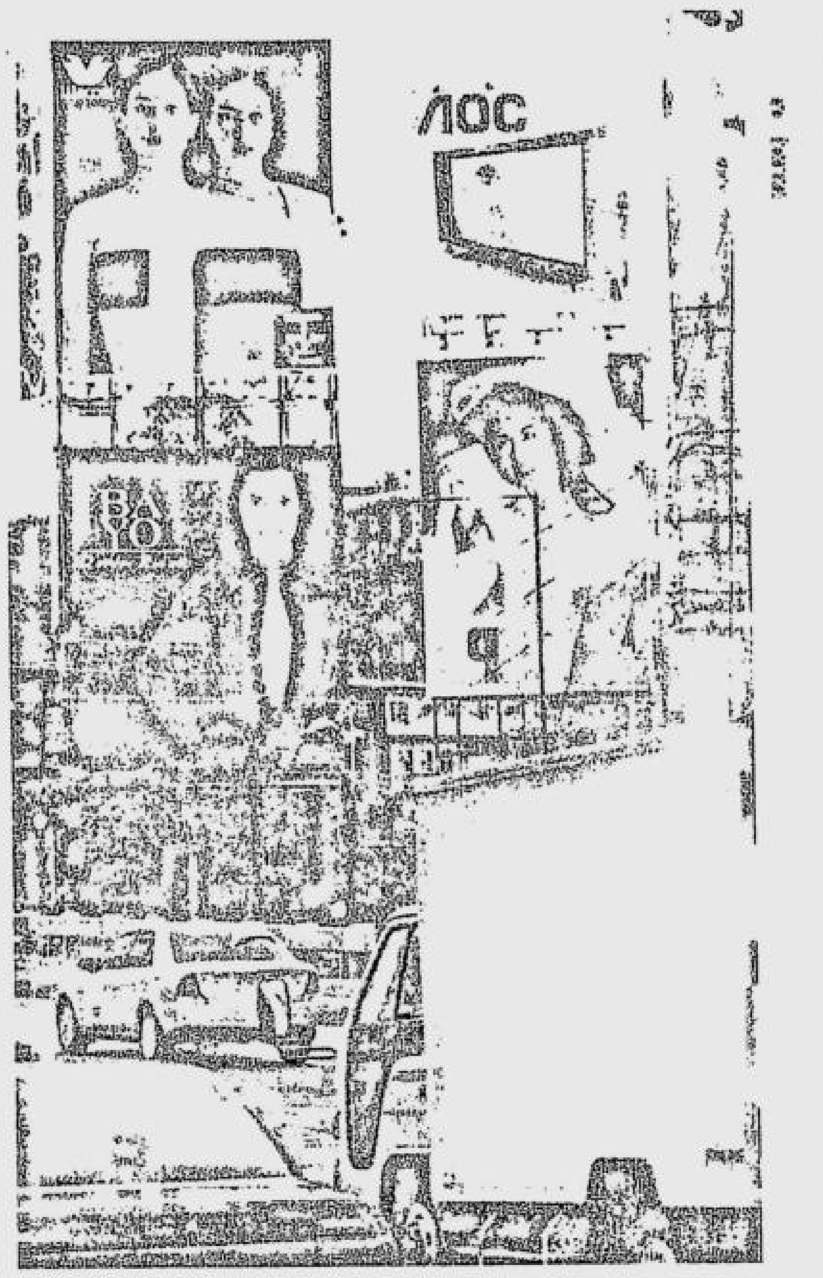

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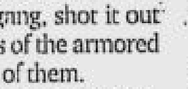

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The law firm of Barcelona, Barcelona and Magdamit has written this writer that all queries about the three should be addressed to it.

Daniel and Chris' parents are too poor to hire the services of a lawyer.

* * *

As expected, Supt. Elnora Bernardino, former Palawan police director, did not attend her arraignment at the regional trial court in Puerto Princesa last Tuesday, May 13, where she's charged with violating the Omnibus Election Code.

Bernardino is charged with providing guns to some goons of a political candidate she favored a couple of years ago. The case has been pending for years at the regional trial court. The trial cannot start without her being arraigned.

The court has issued a warrant for Bernardino's arrest, but she has yet to be taken in.

* * *

If the judge, Nelia Fernandez, doesn't know how to go about arresting her, I suggest she try sending the arrest warrant to Director Jose Lalisan Jr., directorate for personnel and management, Camp Crame, Quezon City.

By the way, why is it that the administrative case against Bernardino has been pending with the Philippine National Police for a long time?

In addition to the criminal case, Bernardino is facing an administrative case from grave misconduct.

Now I know the extent of power and influence the Iglesia ni Cristo has over the courts, as well as the PNP. Bernardino is a member of this religious sect.

* * *

A board member at the Land Transportation, Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) is being accused by a consortium of insurance companies of harassment.

The board member is reportedly preventing the members of the consortium from setting up booths inside the LTFRB premises which has been the practice for a long time.

The consortium says the board member is doing that because after the consortium refused his demand that they give him a monthly retainer.

The insurance consortium says Dante Lantin, the LTFRB chair, is not being alluded to. There are three members of the LTFRB, one of whom is Lantin.

* * *

Despite the people's close guarding of the forests in Palawan against illegal logging, some unscrupulous groups still manage to cut down trees in the province's virgin forests.

Recently, forest rangers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Palawan seized about 24,000 board feet of flitches from a motor launch bound for Malaysia.

The flitches came from trees cut down in the forest of Bataraza town, according to Raymundo Crisostomo, Palawan DENR chief.

"No matter how hard we guard the forests here, Mon, some people still try to engage in illegal logging. That's because illegal logging is profitable," said Crisostomo.

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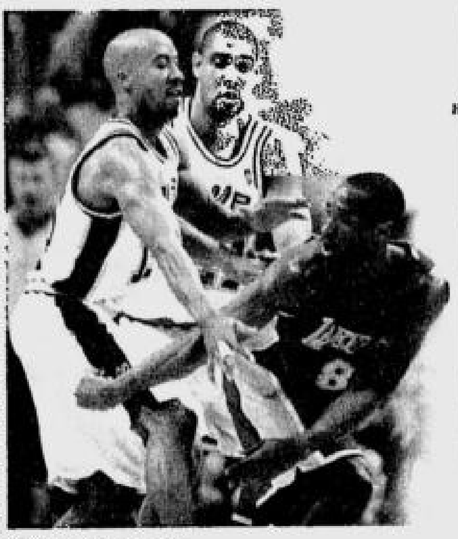
WHAT'S INSIDE



One to go for Spurs, Mavs /A26

Delariarte tops elims /A27

Spectator: Selecting Sorenstam /A26

Vijay apologizes to Annika /A26

Gonzales declines test

Diagnosis useless, says Talk N Text power forward

By June Navarro

SAYING it's going to be useless anyway, Talk N Text power forward Norman Gonzales yesterday declined to undergo another urine diagnosis as he continued to dispute the result of a random drug test conducted by the Philippine Basketball Association a week ago.

The refusal came after the Phone Pals management raised the possibility of bringing the urine specimen of Gonzales to the United States for DNA testing to prove once and for all if the former San Beda College standout did take the party drug "Ecstasy."

A team official, who refused to be identified, said the contents of the power booster pill that Gonzales claimed he had taken would also be examined to determine if the pill has substances similar to Ecstasy.

GONZALES PDIPHOTO

Gonzales, known for his defense and rebounding prowess, stuck to his claim that his urine specimen was switched with another player.

Gonzales was randomly tested along with Alaska's Stephen Padilla and Brandon Lee Cablay and Talk N Text teammate William Kahi Villa.

Since a week had lapsed and Gonzales failed to formally contest the league's findings, the 6-foot-4 Phone Pal will have to sit out the remainder of the conference and the entire Asian Invitationals.

"Since the PBA will use the same urine specimen, he (Gonzales) probably thought it would be useless. But just the same, he will be suspended indefinitely until we reevaluate his status before the last conference," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

The season-ending conference, where teams will be boosted by foreign-bred cagers, is slated September, giving Gonzales ample time to clear his name.

Eala said Gonzales should present a counseling and rehabilitation program certificate to the commissioner's office, and the league would conduct physical and mental tests before allowing the cager to see action again.

All eyes on Payla in nat'l slugfest

VIOLITO Payla, one of the country's brightest hopes for a first Olympic gold medal, will be the center of attraction of the prestigious National Open boxing championship slated May 25-31 in Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

Postponed twice due to the Holy Week break and in deference to the Palarong Pambansa, the weeklong tournament, which aims at finding new members of the national training pool, will also feature a new breed of women boxers.

"I would like to thank the people of Palawan and Gov. Joel T. Reyes for making this annual event possible. Gov. Reyes has been very gracious in accommodating our request to host the tournament," said Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez during the PSA Forum at the Holiday Inn Tuesday.

Gov. Reyes earlier told the INQUIRER that the province, known as the Last Frontier for its vast natural resources, is ready and honored to host the event.

Dennis U. Eroa

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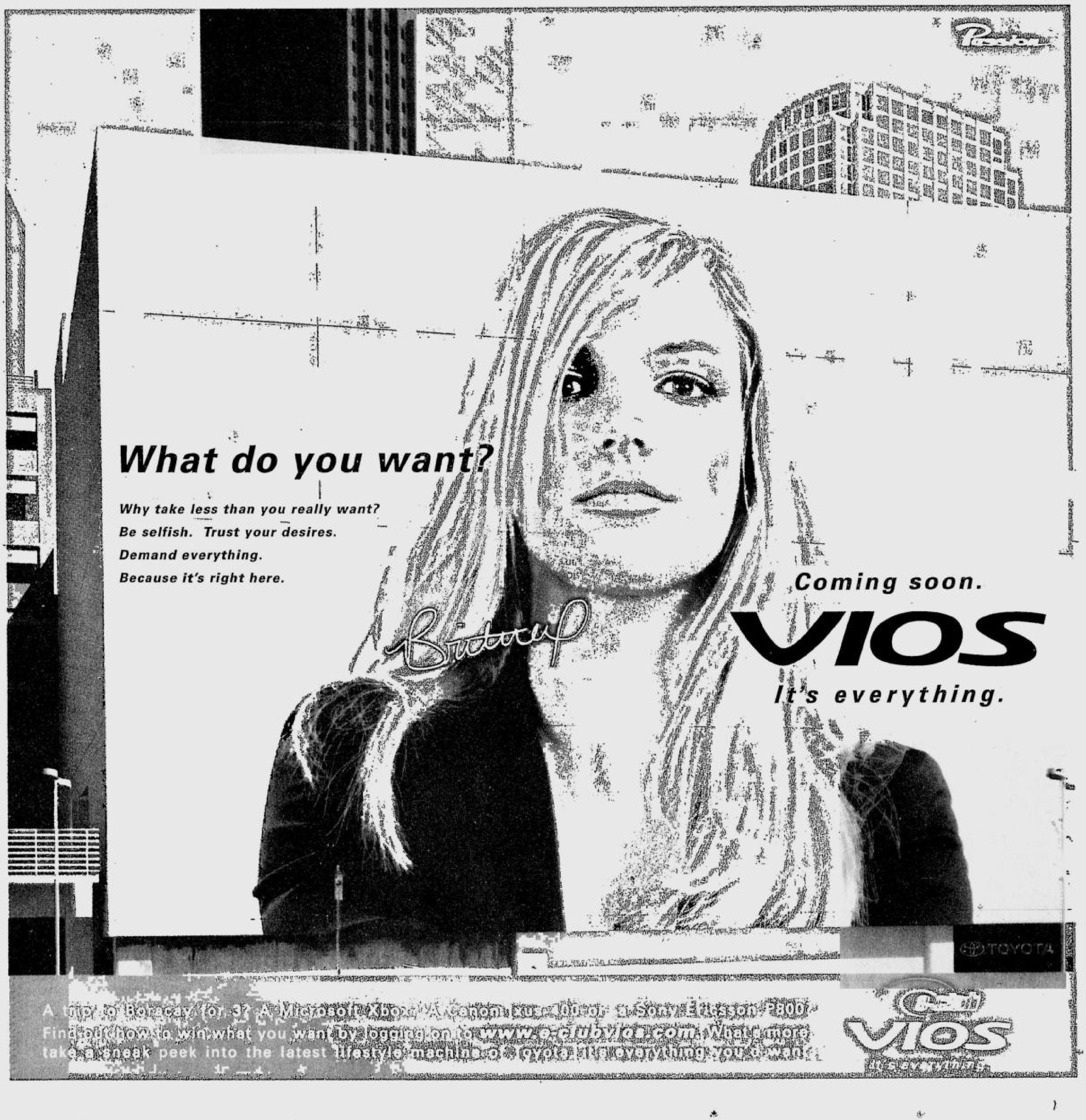

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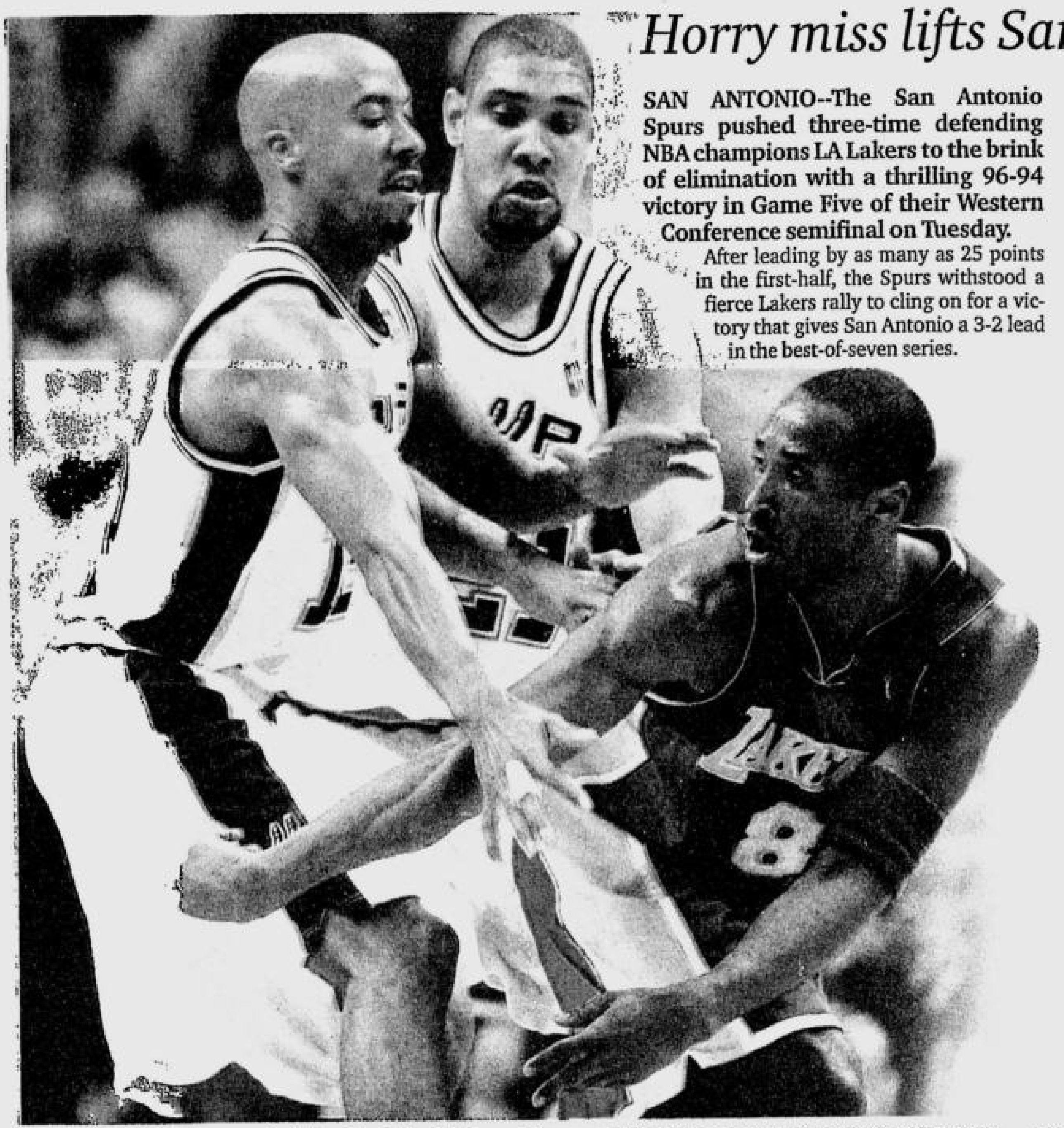
One to go for Spurs, Mavs

Horry miss lifts San Antonio past LA



KOBE Bryant (right) passes the ball as San Antonio's Bruce Bowen and Tim Duncan harass him in the fourth quarter. AFP

SAN ANTONIO--The San Antonio Spurs pushed three-time defending NBA champions LA Lakers to the brink of elimination with a thrilling 96-94 victory in Game Five of their Western Conference semifinal on Tuesday.

After leading by as many as 25 points in the first-half, the Spurs withstood a fierce Lakers rally to cling on for a victory that gives San Antonio a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series.

Robert Horry had a chance to win it for the Lakers at the buzzer, but his wide-open three-point attempt refused to drop.

Earlier, the Dallas Mavericks rallied from a halftime deficit to ease past the Sacramento Kings 112-93 for a 3-2 series lead.

The narrow loss was a bitter blow for returning Lakers coach Phil Jackson, who missed Game Four while recovering from heart surgery, and he must now rally the team for Game Six in Los Angeles on Thursday.

If a seventh game is needed, it will be played in San Antonio on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

A relieved Tim Duncan, who topped the Spurs with 27 points and 14 boards, took the blame for Horry being so open. "That was my guy," said the reigning MVP.

It was a roller-coaster game, not good for anyone's heath, and certainly not that of Jackson, who underwent an emergency angioplasty just three days before.

Veteran David Robinson put San Antonio up by seven with less than two minutes remaining, seemingly icing the game.

But the Lakers' Kobe Bryant, who finished with a whopping 36 points, hit from three-point range to make it a four-point game again.

A Shaquille O'Neal putback followed by a successful free-throw made it a one-point game, setting the stage for Horry's three-point effort.

Mavs 112, Kings 93

In Dallas, the Mavericks held the Sacramento Kings to a mere 10 points in the third period while notching 29 in a lopsided 112-93 victory.

The Mavericks now lead the best-of-seven conference semi-final series 3-2, with Game Six in Sacramento on Thursday.

If a seventh game is needed, it will take place back in Dallas two days later.

"Defensively we've got to be sharp, like we were in the second half," said the Mavs' Dirk Nowitzki, who pulled down 15 rebounds while pouring in 16 points.

He also dished out nine assists, apparently unconcerned by a $5,000 fine slapped on him earlier in the day for a towel-kicking incident late in Game Four.

Steve Nash led the Mavericks with 25 points, making all but one of his 16 free throws and drawing praise from losing coach Rick Adelman.

"He's a tough sucker," Adelman said.

Early on, it looked as if the Kings might romp, as they raced to a 12-4 lead. Sacramento maintained that margin to the half, thanks largely to Doug Christie's 15 points.

But it was all Dallas in the third, as Sacramento shot a mere 13 percent. *Reuters*

SOLAR Sports will telecast Game Five of the Detroit Pistons-Philadelphia 76ers NBA Eastern Conference semifinals at 7 tonight (Thursday, May 15) on IBC-13. It will also air a replay of yesterday's Dallas Mavericks-Sacramento Kings Game Five on Channel 29 at 8 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Pistons in must-win situation—Atkins

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan--Allen Iverson is tough to stop, even for the Detroit Pistons' defense. Now he's making his teammates part of the show.

Iverson is averaging 29.8 points and a truly impressive 9.3 assists in the second round of the playoffs, helping the Philadelphia 76ers forge a 2-2 tie with Detroit heading into Wednesday night's (Thursday morning in Manila) Game 5.

"He's so elusive," Pistons coach Rick Carlisle said. "It's hard to be physical and bang him, even if you want to."

When Iverson is not scoring on jumpers or layups, he's helping his teammates score easy baskets, because the Pistons swarm him once the ball is in his hands.

As well as he's been playing — his 32.8-point postseason scoring average is just 0.1 behind league leader Kobe Bryant — Iverson is still bothered by a certain trip to the foul line.

With the 76ers ahead by two points with 15 seconds left in Game 2, he missed two free throws. Detroit wound up winning in overtime.

"I think I can get the bad taste out of my mouth if we can win the series," Iverson said Tuesday.

The Pistons, meanwhile, count on their toughness, rebounding and overall team defense to contain opponents. The Pistons allowed just 87.7 points a game during the regular season, the fewest in the NBA.

The top-seeded Pistons are trying to make up for losing a 2-0 lead against the 76ers.

With Game 6 in Philadelphia, the Pistons know the 76ers would take a huge step toward facing New Jersey in the conference finals by winning Wednesday.

"It's a must-win situation for us," Detroit's Chucky Atkins said. "We do well in those kind of games."

The Pistons became the seventh NBA team to win a series after trailing 3-1 in the first round against the Orlando Magic. But they did that with Chauncey Billups and Ben Wallace healthy. *AP*

AT A GLANCE

NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

SECOND ROUND

Eastern Conference

(1) Detroit vs. (4) Philadelphia

Pistons 2, Sixers 2
Game 1: Detroit 98, Philadelphia 87
Game 2: Detroit 104, Philadelphia 97
Game 3: Philadelphia 93, Detroit 83
Game 4: Philadelphia 95, Detroit 82
Game 5 at Detroit (May 15, 8 a.m.)
Game 6 at Philadelphia (May 17, 7:30 a.m.)
*Game 7 at Detroit (May 19, TBD)

(2) New Jersey vs (6) Boston

Nets 4, Celtics 0
Game : New Jersey 97, Boston 93
Game 2 : New Jersey 104, Boston 95
Game 3: New Jersey 94, Boston 76
Game 4: New Jersey 110, Boston 101
New Jersey wins series, 4-0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

(1) San Antonio vs (5) LA Lakers

Spurs 3, Lakers 2
Game 1: San Antonio 87, Lakers 82
Game 2: San Antonio 114, Lakers 95
Game 3: Los Angeles 110, San Antonio 95
Game 4: Los Angeles 99, San Antonio 95
Game 5: San Antonio 96, Los Angeles 94
Game 6 at Los Angeles (May 16, 8 a.m.)
*Game 7 at San Antonio (May 18, TBD)

(2) Sacramento vs (3) Dallas

Kings 2, Mavs 3
Game 1: Sacramento 124, Dallas 113
Game 2: Dallas 132, Sacramento 110
Game 3: Dallas 141, Sacramento 137
Game 4: Sacramento 99, Dallas 83
Game 5: Dallas 112, Sacramento 93
Game 6 at Sacramento (May 16, 10:30 a.m.)
*Game 7 at Dallas (May 18, TBD)

* If necessary
TBD (To Be Determined)

Blu Detergent seeks top spot

GAMES TODAY *(Pasig Sports Center)*
2 p.m.--Blu vs ICTSI
4 p.m.--Viva vs LBC-Batangas

FOR Blu coach Leo Isaac, consistency and intensity will be the key to the Detergent Kings' bid to gain top spot in Pool B against the ICTSI Archers at 2 p.m. today in the Sunkist-PBL 2003 Unity Cup.

"Consistency will be a big factor and I hope that the boys will show the same intensity they displayed when we won (85-56) against Nuti-licious," said Isaac.

Even if they do, however, there's really no guarantee that the Detergent Kings can get past the Archers.

Reason: ICTSI also routed Nutri-licious, 110-76, Tuesday night.

Their first encounter was also inconclusive, with Blu nipping ICTSI, 61-60, on April 6 at the San Juan Gym. *Roy Luarca*

Singh to Sorenstam: I'm sorry

IRVING, Texas--Vijay Singh said he was sorry if his comments about Annika Sorenstam playing on the PGA Tour — "I hope she misses the cut" — came across as a personal attack.

"If it was an attack on Annika at all, I would like to apologize to her," Singh said Tuesday after a practice round for this week's Byron Nelson Classic. "It was not put that way. It came out the wrong way."

Singh told The Associated Press on Sunday that Sorenstam had no business playing in next week's Colonial and said that on the odd chance he gets paired with her, he'd withdraw.

"I hope she misses the cut. Why? Because she doesn't belong out here," Singh told AP golf writer Doug Ferguson during an interview as he left the locker room after the Wachovia Championship in Charlotte, North Carolina. "If I'm drawn with her, which I won't be, I won't play."

On Tuesday, Singh attempted to cast his remarks in a different light.

"I actually said if I miss the cut, I'd rather she miss the cut as well," he told reporters who were waiting for him as he came off the course. "I hope she missed the cut because I don't want to have a woman beat me." *AP*

Selecting Sorenstam

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

VIJAY Singh had quite a mouthful the other day against women playing in a men's golf tournament. He didn't mince words attacking a Swedish lady's decision to join a men's event next week–the star-studded Colonial.

"I hope she misses the cut," came the most scathing remark yet from Singh, the winner of two majors and who is No. 7 in the world.

Singh's comment was particularly directed at Annika Sorenstam, the 32-year-old Swede, who has been the world's No. 1 woman golfer the last two years or so. She won 13 titles last year, the most by a woman in nearly 40 years. In 2001, Sorenstam became the first woman to shoot 59.

To the uninitiated, a tournament for men is different from a women's event in that men hit from tee boxes farther than from where women make their tee shots. Simply put, men play a longer course than women. Distance is what separates them.

Unlike basketball, tennis or even boxing, whose arenas have the same specifications, golf's cardinal rule always specifies that men play a longer course than women. That has been the case since golf was invented some 200 years or so ago.

Men, by nature, are stronger than women?

Maybe.

Men do not play against women in a basketball tournament.

Men do not play against women in a tennis tournament.

Men do not fight women in a boxing contest.

Of course, men and women can scrimmage/spar in all three disciplines. But we have yet to see men and women mixing it up in a tournament in any of the said events. There was this tennis event a while back pitting a man against a woman but it was merely for exhibition; the man won. Basketball has had its own exhibition matches between both sexes, too.

But boxing?

None yet, I believe. And, for obvious reasons, that should be disallowed outright if one were to stage one, exhibition or otherwise.

The truth is, the world has yet to see a legitimate competition pitting the opposite sexes, be it a physical sport or not. That is why wonder of wonders, even a noncontact sport like chess has its male world champion and female world champion. Both champions have yet to meet, however, in a world championship to unify the title.

Men, by nature too, are stronger mentally than women?

You be the judge.

But come to think of it, even the world chess federation (Fide) hasn't said a thing or two about this weird setup. I am partly to blame. I haven't asked Florencio Campomanes, the Filipino who almost single-handedly transformed chess into a premiere world event during his almost two decades of reign as Fide president beginning in 1982. So, Campo, if you happen to read this, please ring me up and say something about it?

But going back to Vijay Singh and his beef against women bidding to compete in a for-men-only golf tournaments.

"She (Sorenstam) doesn't belong out here and if I'm drawn with her, which I won't be, I won't play," said Singh, a native of the Fiji Islands. "What is she going to prove by playing? It's ridiculous."

I guess Singh has gone out of bounds.

In the first place, Singh knows he won't be playing in the same group as Sorenstam when Sorenstam becomes the first woman in 58 years to compete on the men's tour. Singh's name will be drawn from a pool of PGA Tour winners when the pairings are made.

And Sorenstam is merely trying to honor an invitation from the sponsors to play, a decision that also drew a harsh rebuke from Nick Price.

"Sorenstam's presence reeks of publicity," said Price, the defending Colonial champion.

Frankly, I find their anti-woman sentiments funny, if not repulsive.

One, Sorenstam did not force herself into the event. Accepting the invitation merely duplicates Babe Zaharias' feat when Zaharias joined the 1945 Los Angeles Open, making the cut no less.

Two, what's so repugnant about Sorenstam's presence? If there's any repugnance about it at all, it is the reactions of Singh and Price to it; reactions that do not only reek of misplaced machismo but also of narrow-mindedness.

Yes, by all means let's have Sorenstam in the Colonial. And pray that she beats the hell out of them male chauvinist pigs.

FASTBREAK: My friends from the military, like Commodore Danny Pizarro and Col. Ely Buluran, tell me that Romy Alamillo has finally gained his first star. Romy, my high school classmate who is a wedding godson of Vice Admiral (ret.) Louie F. Fernandez, is now a brigadier general. The star, pinned on Romy in Malacanang last night, is long overdue actually but as the saying goes, "Better late than never." Here's a glass to you, Romy, for doing your batchmates (Spirit of '67) proud.

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SPORTSWATCH

Invitational tourney on

THE BATTLE for supremacy in the Invitational golf tournament gets going today at the Forest Hills Golf and Country Club in Antipolo City. No less than 340 members and guests, representing 170 teams, are competing in the four-day event which is presented by Global Shelter and Taylor-made adidas together with major sponsors CAP, MRT, Turf Co., Club Leisure Management Inc. and Rudy Project. "On behalf of the club and the sports and games committee, I would like to welcome all the participants of the Invitational," said Forest Hills chair Ferdinand T. Santos. Other backers of the event are Lipovitan, former Rep. Gilberto Duavit, Tee-MaG Ventures Corp., Philippine Wine Merchants, Body Worx Spa & Fitness Club, Manila Southwoods Manor, Camp John Hay Manor, and Fairways & Bluewater Resort Golf and Country Club.

POC painting contest

CASH prizes worth P150,000 will be at stake in the Philippine Olympic Committee's painting contest with the theme "Sport on Canvas and Paper." Held in coordination with the Art Association of the Philippines, the competition is open to all artists 18 years and above. First prize is worth P50,000, second P30,000, third P20,000 and P10,000 each for honorable mention, according to POC culture commission chair Becky Garcia and sculptor Ramon Orlina. For details, call the AAP at 3033097 or 6341283.

Solis downs Cordero

PATRICK Lin Solis of Miang, North Cotabato clipped Kyle Cordero, 6-3, 6-4, to gain a quarterfinal seat in the boys' 12-under quarterfinals of the Tru-flex National Age-Group Tennis Championships yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Next up for Solis is second seed Patrick Arevalo of Ilocos Norte, a 6-1, 6-3 winner over Jay Suyosa. Other winners were No. 1 Gerard Michael Ngo over Michael Fabila, 6-2, 6-0, No. 3 Akio Hari-Ong Sy over Joman Narvaez, 6-1, 6-1, No. 5 Bernardine Siso of Cebu over Raj Gerard Dycoco of Legazpi City, 6-0, 6-2 and No. 6 Joseph Baldonado over Raffy Delavin, 6-1, 6-0.

Tennis GP unfolds

TOP tennisters in the Visayas take the limelight when the Osaka Tennis Grand Prix unfolds today at the Southern Island Tennis Club in Cebu City. Oswaldo Dumoran and Janjie Soquino will lead the nearly 200 netters entered in the meet organized by Osaka Iridology and held under the auspices of the Cebu City Sports Commission. Pardo Tennis Club will host the final on Sunday. The champion will receive P4,000 while the runner-up gets P2,000.

Alabang cage clinic

REYES

THE COCA-COLA Champions Basketball Youth Camp Module Two will last up to May 31 at the De La Salle Santiago Zobel School in Ayala Alabang. The training sessions are being conducted by Coca-Cola Tigers head coach and current PBA Coach of the Year co-awardee Chot Reyes, with members of the 2002 PBA All-Filipino champion Coca-Cola Tigers on hand for personalized on-court mentoring. Reyes is also supported by his United States Basketball Academy-certified coaching staff. The camp is open to boys and girls from 8-18. For details and registration, call Judy Padilla (6873667) or Joan Sanchez (8091869 / 5600851).

PSA derby on tonight

THE MUCH-AWAITED PSA-Sagupaan-Ucap 5-cock derby will unfold at 7 tonight at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. More than 50 fights are on tap, with the winner receiving the top prize of P500,000 in the derby hosted by the Philippine Sportswriters Association headed by Bert Cuevas of the Manila Standard and sponsored by Sagupaan and Mandaluyong Coliseum Management. Patrick Antonio of the Sagupaan fame is giving away T-shirts to the first 200 paying patrons.

Subic divefest Sunday

THE 7th Subic Dive Fiesta fires off May 17 at the Subic Bay Aqua Sports Center along Waterfront Road, SBMA. Various scuba gear and prizes will be given away for the treasure hunt portion of the event backed by Subic Bay Aquasports Scuba Shack, SBMA, Pista San Barrio, Boardwalk Inn, San Miguel, Coca-Cola, Viva Mineral Water, Wilkins Mineral Water Cosmos Bottling Corp., Asia Brewery, Colt 45 and Cantina Mexicana. For more details, call 0917-8992363 (Macky) or (047) 252-7343 (Jinky).

Scrabble tilt slated

THE SCRABBLE Association of the Philippines Inc. (Scap), in cooperation with Mabuhay Educational Center will hold its 2003 National Scrabble Championship on June 6-8 at the SM North, Quezon City. Entries from Mindanao, Cebu City, Iloilo City, San Fernando City, Pangasinan, Laguna, Bulacan, Batangas, Cavite, Rizal, Camarines Norte and Manila are expected to join the tournament managed by Sports Activities Inc. For details, call Mario Miranda at (0920) 544-5837.

RACING TIPS

AT SAN LAZARO BY MR. 999

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Race 2--1. Aprev [illegible]pecial 2. Ganda 3. D'Barrister 4. Lucky Gambit 5. [illegible] Mauler
Race 3--1. Hingis 2. Armee's Hope 3. El Magnifico
Race 4--1. D'Engineer 2. Dazzling Affair 3. Simple Doding 4. Divine Right 5. Nitty Gritty
Race 5--1. Tim Specialist 2. Boss Lino 3. Seiko Shita
Race 6--1. Puppy Dog Tail 2. Graceful Ann 3. Summit Power 4. Secret Quest 5. Reverie
Race 7--1. Patago 2. Super Dancer 3. Green Buck
Race 8--1. Classic Star 2. Marvelous Jay 3. Bring Home D Bacon 4. Lady Be Gold
Race 9--1. Noor 2. La Signorina/Little Sam 3. Real Diamond 4. Sharp Drive 5. Jazz In Time 6. Free Entrance

Delariarte tops RP amateur elims again

By Jong Arcano

IF his domination of the stroke play phase was any indication, Jerome Delariarte seems on the road to a trouble-free repeat in the Philippine amateur golf championship.

While his challengers were ranting over strokes lost to the vicious hazards and the tricky greens of Riviera's Langer course, Delariarte just had one bad hole as he easily topped the eliminations for the second straight year with another one-over-par 72.

Delariarte was the low medalist for both qualifying days with yesterday's round spiked by a 60-foot birdie on the 11th. And he was too consistent the next man in the standings–ex-pro Dave Hernandez who shot a 75–was five strokes back at 149.

Juvic Pagunsan, Tommy Manotoc, Abe Rosal, Artemio Murakami and most of the prominent figures all made it to the 32-man tournament proper, where play shifts to match, starting today.

DELARIARTE PDI PHOTO

Delariarte drew reigning national caddies champion Jonard Rates, who grabbed the 32nd and last berth, in the first match at 7 a.m. while Hernandez, now the golf director of Calatagan, got a dangerous first-round date with Canlubang teammate Boyet Zaragosa.

Manotoc finished in the middle of the surviving pack despite an 83-156. Although known for disliking the match play format, organizers said Manotoc may yet show up for his first round match today against Alabang's King Stehmeier.

In the past, Manotoc would join the stroke play stage then waive his slot if he makes it to the next round. Jake Ayson of the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines said Manotoc seems bent on showing up since he was noncommittal yesterday.

Pagunsan had a mediocre 79 to finish fifth at 154, but he was quick to admit that advancing to the match play stage was all that mattered anyway.

Also advancing were four junior golfers–Nonoy Negrido, IG Gutierrez, Miko Alejandro and Tonton Asistio. It was ball-basher Negrido who performed best among the four, clinching a tie for third place with Raymund Sangil and Marvin Dumandan with his 78-153.

8 in a row for Superal

By Jong Arcano

WOLEN Juan Superal shooting under par in the Samsung Jungolf Tour yesterday was something old. But Gabby Villareal coming very close to victory was something new.

Giving his rivals no hope of coming no closer than a double-digit deficit, Superal extended his streak of sub-par rounds to eight with a 67 and secured his seventh consecutive victory this summer as he erected a 31-stroke lead after the penultimate round of the Canlubang Jungolf Open.

A day after setting the lowest ever score of 60 in jungolf history, Superal was still at it with his ninth under-par score in 10 rounds. His 36-hole total of 125 was again a new 36-hole mark.

Villareal, son of a noted corporate lawyer, seems on the way to upholding the trend of a different winner for every leg in the boys Class B action.

Villareal's 77 put him at 159 with Q'roni Baterna a far second at 169 after an 80. If he goes all the way, he would become the seventh brand new winner in the event.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Kings vs Mavericks, Game 5 (May 14); 8 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); Solar Sports–Dallas attempts to take a 3-2 advantage at home against short-handed Sacramento.
Sixers vs Pistons, Game 5; 7 p.m., IBC 13–It's now down to a best-of-three series between the City of Brotherly Love and Motown.
GOLF:PGA Wachovia Championship; 7 p.m.; Star Sports–Take a closer at David Toms' coronation in the Queen City.
Michelob Light Open; 2 p.m.; ESPN - More than a fashion icon on the LPGA Tour, watch how our very own J. Ro manages to challenge the likes of Se Ri Pak and Annika Sorenstam for a place in the top ten.
TENNIS: Hamburg Masters; 12 noon., 2 p.m., 8 p.m., 10 p.m. and midnight; Star Sports–The field dwindles to 16 as the action get hotter in Hamburg.

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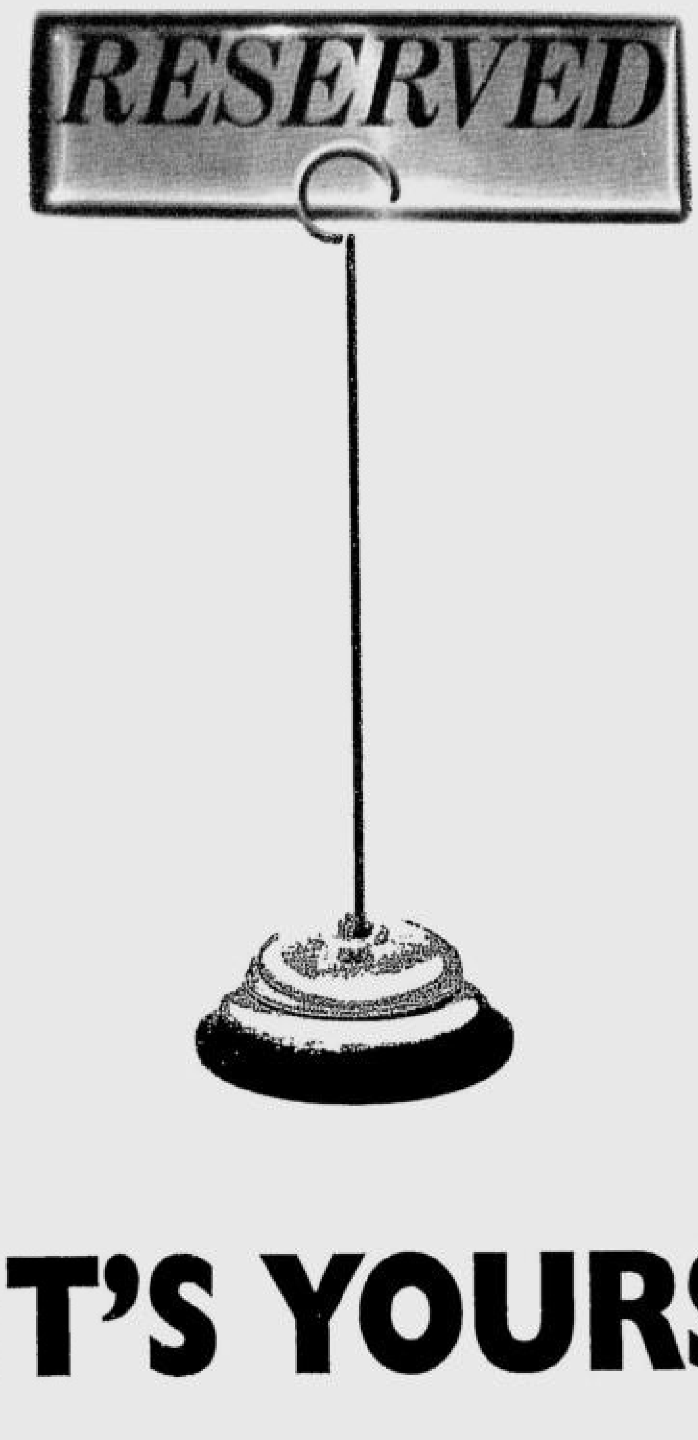

IT'S YOURS.

Touchy topics

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE had talks with some TV-film industry leaders last week, and these are some of the touchy topics we discussed:

Our recent piece on the deterioration of local TV programming got flak from some colleagues. They didn't agree with our observation that local TV has never been as irresponsible as it is now.

They "reminded" us that, during the Martial Law period, the TV news was controlled, and sycophants ran riot on the TV screen.

Even earlier, they recalled, local TV was really primitive. Remember the TV newscast in the '60s where the "newscaster" merely read the news from the front page of a newspaper?!

Yes, that was pretty bad. But we continued to maintain that the current deterioration of acceptable standards on our TV screens is a major crisis and scandal that the leading networks must address before viewers completely lose their trust in them.

The talk then shifted to **Carol Banawa**. When she came out in the movie, "Tanging Yaman," viewers liked her because she was so different from the slick *mestiza* types usually seen on TV-movie screens these days.

In fact, some industry observers even felt that she could become this generation's **Nora Aunor**, since like the Superstar, she was dusky and had a very good and expressive singing voice.

In fact, that was why ABS-CBN got Carol to play Nora Aunor's daughter in the popular soap, "Bituin."

However, we note that Carol has changed her image of late. When she performs on other TV shows, she dolls herself up, puts on quite a lot of make-up, and tries to appear trendy and with-it.

This may be the more popular way to go, especially for young talents like Carol. But, in trying to do what others are doing, she has lost her unique edge and advantage over them, and has become just one of the ultimately faceless throng. What a waste.

With her updated, modernized image as a trendy singer, Carol has ceased to be the rightful heiress to Nora Aunor's entertainment throne, and it's now Judy Ann Santos who's being talked about as the new, young superstar—not because she looks like Nora or performs like her, but because she has become popular with the mass audience. Where does that leave Carol Banawa?

Finally, show biz observers are talking about the box office prospects of **Ai Ai delas Alas** first starrer, "Ang Natatanging Ina." They note that it's opening on the same day as FPJ's "Pakners," but think that Ai Ai's film will make money because it will interest a different kind of film audience.

True, both "Ina" and "Pakners" have a comedy element, but the second film is mainly aimed at action and billiards fans, while Ai Ai's starrer is intended generally for women viewers.

Observers expect Ai Ai to do well as a movie star because she's providing something relatively fresh and new. Also, she has the habit of surprising people with her unexpected show biz feats, like filling up huge venues with her comedy concerts. So, Ai Ai could pull another surprise on May 28, when her film starts its run.

Side A in 'Acoustic Nights'

SIDE A performs in "Viva Acoustic Nights" at Onstage Greenbelt on Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17. The group has come up with hits like "Forevermore," "So Many Questions" and "Hold On" in the many years that it's been performing. Side A is made up of **Joey Generoso, Naldy Gonzales, Kelly Badon, Joey Benin** and **Ernie Severion.**

Young mayor

"YOUNG Global Hotshots" on the National Geographic Channel at 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 20 features 31-year-old Venezuelan mayor **Leopoldo Lopez.**

Leopoldo Lopez is not only one of Venezuela's youngest mayors, but he's also one of the country's most effective opposition leaders. Besides visiting projects in his municipality, Chacao, and speaking with inhabitants of Shantytowns, he finds time to visit his parents.

Aiko's new admirer is a younger man from Scotland

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

SOMETIMES the best things in life are those we don't plan.

I've never considered chance encounters as accidents. Fate brings certain people together for specific reasons. Serendipity.

This was running through my mind as I listened to **Aiko Melendez**'s story about the foreigner she met in Boracay.

Aiko gushed, "Q approached me and introduced himself. He's from Scotland. You know how it is in Boracay. Everyone is friendly and in a party mood so I didn't see anything wrong with it. Besides, he's really such a decent guy."

I teased, "So is it goodbye Pinoys for you? Are you going to go for 'imported stuff' or the 'foreign elements' now?"

Aiko smiled. "At this point, I can't say for sure if he's courting me but I find it really sweet that on his way back to Scotland from Boracay, he'll stay a few days in Manila to visit me. He's quite young, though, only 24, so I'll just take it easy."

At first Aiko didn't want to tell him that she's an actress and a politician, which I think is the best way to get things started so any biases would be set aside. The dilemma of most celebrities is that they often can't discount the possibility that some people are befriending them because of who they are. There are instances, too, when someone is so starstruck that the possibility of a friendship or romance blossoming is nil.

But Aiko could not hide it for long. "He asked me why everywhere I went, people would have their pictures taken with me. So I had no choice but to tell him why. He was shocked. From then on he would tease me and call me Julia Roberts from the movie 'Notting Hill'."

Having had my own share of relationships with guys who were not from show biz, I must say that they keep me in touch with reality. When both of you are from show biz, you tend to miss out on the bigger picture.

So is Mr. Q star material, too?

Aiko giggled. "He is a cross between **Matt Damon** and **Leonardo di Caprio!**"

I gasped. "Why don't you lure him to try show biz then?"

She sighed. "He just went to Boracay for Holy Week to help out his friend who owns a bar there. He'll be flying back to Scotland to put up his bar. How funny because he'll pass by Hong Kong to visit his dad who's a professor there. I teased him that he might get SARS."

I chided Aiko, "Looks like it's the love virus that hit him when he met you."

She laughed. "*Dyahe naman*! I don't want to presume anything. Feeling *ko talaga hanggang* friends *lang kami*. He's too young. I'm 27 already."

I asked her, "What if Q invites you for a holiday in Scotland? Would you go?"

After a long pause, she beamed. "I haven't been to Scotland, so why not? But of course I'll only go if I can take my son **Andre** with me."

It's too early to tell if bells will be ringing, but for the moment the merry sound of bagpipes and happy toasts with Scotch whiskey will bring a smile to Aiko's face. A smile that's long overdue for her.

Vic's model

MY fashionista friends insist that Vic Sotto is really getting serious with model **Pia Cabriera**. As my source claimed, "Vic must really know how to take care of his girl because Pia is a bit chubbier now. If he gave his previous girls Bulgari watches, they're no match for what he has given Pia. He even took her on a shopping spree abroad and he spent his birthday with her till the wee hours of the morning."

After his separation from **Dina Bonnevie**, Vic has been linked to countless women but he has remained a bachelor at large. Could Pia finally be the one to tame him?

Knowing how discreet Vic is, I doubt if he'll ever come out in the open about his relationship with Pia. He's not the kiss and tell type. Even when he has already kissed them goodbye, not a soul knows for sure.

Reader writes

"METEOR Garden" is a hit show all over Asia, just as they've advertised. But sadly, ABS-CBN viewers in Visayas and Mindanao are missing out on all the fun because the 4 p.m. time slot is reserved for a regional program, the drama series "For Life." People who've watched the premiere episode of "Meteor Garden" said they like the series and they're starting to get hooked on it. But what about us viewers from Cebu, Davao, and other areas that have ABS regional stations? We're missing out on a great show and it looks like it's going to stay that way unless the network changes its time slot. I'm sure there are lots of viewers like me, especially from Cebu and Davao, who are disappointed as well.—**Rose Maida Perez**, Cebu City

Personal

MUCHISIMAS gracias to my ever-dependable condo "neighbors" **Jing Capati, Leslie** and **Bobet Alip** for their round-the-clock support and friendship.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

DID YOU KNOW...

Lara Fabregas is flying to London on June 5 to pursue her "stage-acting dreams." When asked how long she will be staying there, she answers without blinking, "indefinitely." She says she is selling all her furniture because she does not want to bring any excess baggage with her. Does excess baggage also mean her failed marriage to **Raymond Bagatsing**?

Allan K all set for Big Dome

SHOW TIME

LET your hair down and get wacky when singer-comedian Allan K goes on stage at the Araneta Coliseum for his comic concert, "The Big Nose @ the Big Dome," May 16, 8 p.m.

The show traces Allan's past in its opening production number, with comedienne Beverly Salviejo as his "mother" and an Allan K Jr. singing the funnyman's winning pieces.

The fun continues with the presence of The Sex Bomb Girls, with Allan doing a surprise appearance in the number.

ALLAN K

Another awaited portion is the side-splitting segment of Allan, Ai Ai de las Alas and Arnel Ignacio.

Allan will also do a duet with Regine Velasquez and a production number with comic legends Tito, Vic and Joey.

Concert sponsors are new Head and Shoulders Silky Black, Purefoods Corned Beef, Konika Photo Express, Beam Toothpaste, Tapas, Bambi Navarro, Pagcor and PCSO.

Media partners are Yes-FM, Love Radio and Magic 89.9.

Tickets are available at SM Ticketnet, Araneta Coliseum, Music Museum and Klownz Comedy Bar. For inquiries, call 911-5555, 374-4065 or 819-1885.

Music Box turns 19

MUSIC Box, the original sing-along bar in the country, celebrates its 19th anniversary this month.

The three-day MB mania begins tonight, with the much-awaited grand finals of "The Best of MB" annual singing competition.

Tomorrow night, glitz and glamour blend with entertainment and fun in the nostalgic show, "Puttin' on the Ritz," with surprise singers and stand-up comedians in a repertoire of songs from the '70s to the present.

Saturday, MB holds a wacky version of the Miss Universe beauty contest.

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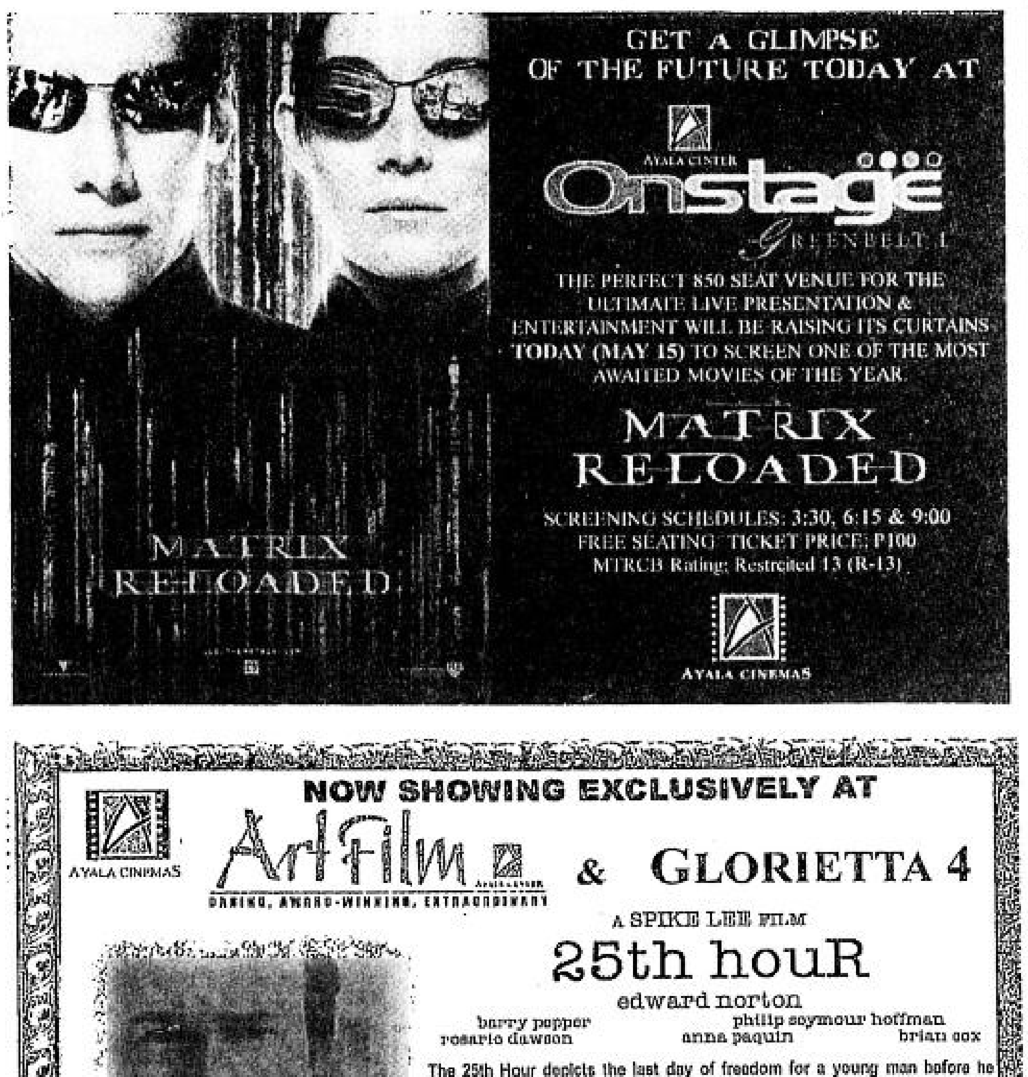

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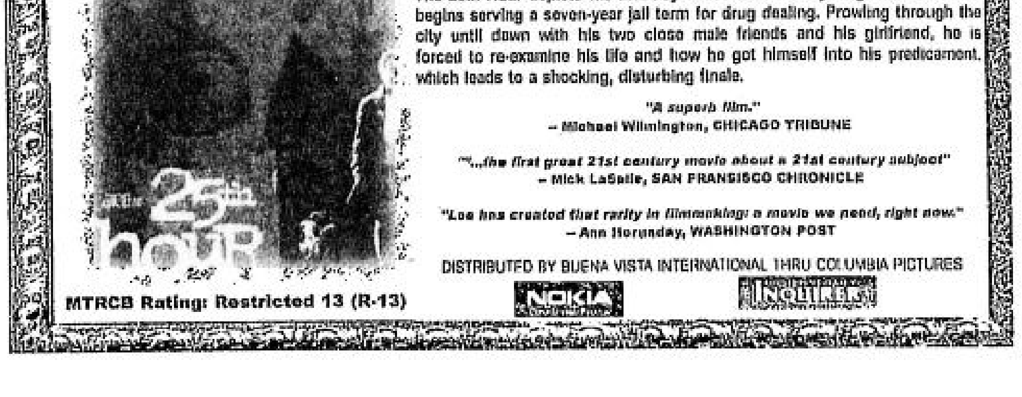

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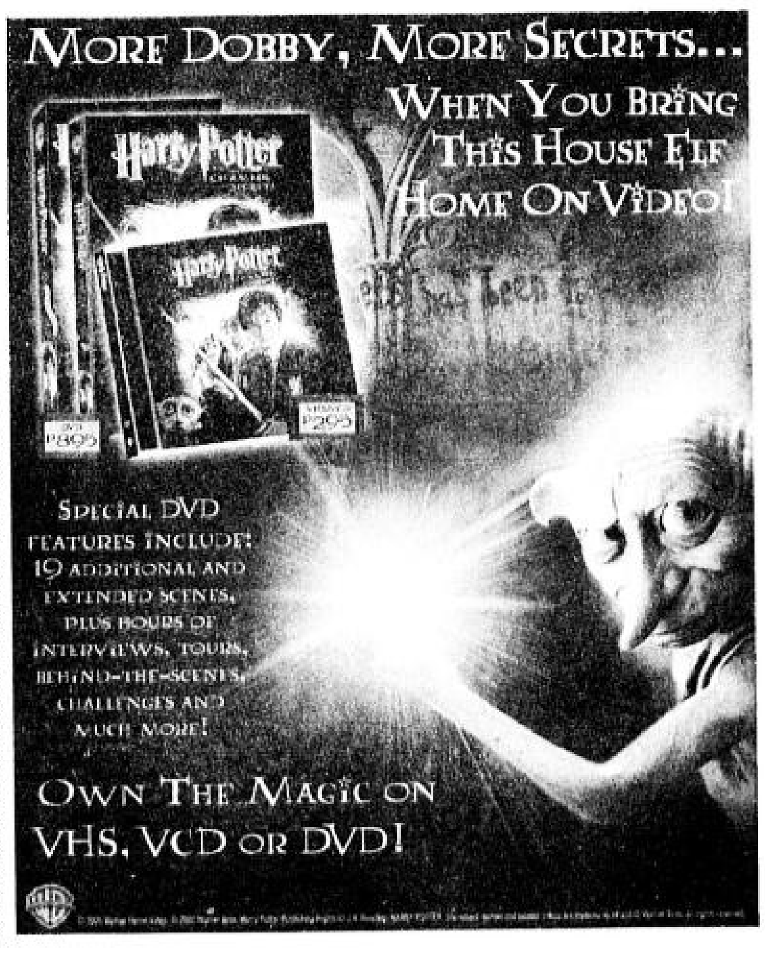

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No sparks flew, but viewers got good value for money

By Vladimir S. Bunoan
Contributor

REVIEW

MARTIN Nievera and Regine Velasquez's "2003 World Concert Tour" is the closest thing to a safe investment in these highly uncertain economic times.

Individually, the two artists are undoubtedly the most consistent crowd drawers in the local concert scene today. Despite their successful, extended Valentine extravaganzas —she with French composer Michel Legrand, he with ex-wife Pops Fernandez— their fans still can't seem to get enough of the two singers. The frenzy that greeted them at the Araneta Coliseum last weekend was solid proof of their robust appeal. The concert will have a repeat on June 14 also at the Big Dome.

Indeed, it is surprising to note that Nievera and Velasquez teamed up only once before, in "Voices" at the Ultra. With their penchant for showy vocals, the two singers are natural as singing partners, and one could even sense that they also bring out the best in each other vocally.

They gravitate towards big ballads, and have in fact made recordings of certain tunes, such as "You are My Song," which appropriately opened the concert. Both scored with this movie theme from "Wanted Perfect Mother" and each is closely associated with this monster hit.

DOUBLE TREAT. Martin Nievera and Regine Velasquez bring out the best in each other, vocally.

Wit for two

But despite the vocal match-up, it's also apparent that Nievera and Velasquez lack that sizzling onstage chemistry, which he has with Fernandez and she shares with Janno Gibbs. While Nievera was his usual glib self, providing the concert with much needed comic relief, Velasquez seemed to be holding back in the repartée. Velasquez has shown to be quite talkative in her solo shows, and even has a self-deprecating sense of humor, but with Nievera, one could feel she was having difficulty keeping up with his loquacious Amboy energy.

Fortunately Nievera has enough wit for both of them. In one of the most candid moments of the show, Nievera commented on his Rajo Laurel-designed costume, which he said made him "feel gay." The crowd could only agree with him, seeing his stocky frame stuffed into leather pants and a tight shiny turquoise shirt with black appliqué that looked like spiders crawling on his back.

Kissing scene

He also remarked on what Velasquez "wasn't wearing," referring to her body-hugging really short dress with slits up to there, which she frequently tugged at uncomfortably while performing duets such as Shalamar's "A Night to Remember" and the mellow classic "With You I'm Born Again." With such a dress, one can't help but wonder indeed what she's wearing underneath.

While such a naughty remark would play well with Fernandez, who would surely find a quick reply, it fizzled with Velasquez. Despite their current status, it's hard to make sparks fly between the two. Thus it was puzzling to see the two stars as ill-fated lovers in a send-up of a telenovela, which was used as a running gag for the show to buy time for the many costume changes. While the dubbed Tagalog dialogue appeared hilarious at first, the novelty quickly wore off and a kissing scene with the two singers hardly raised the crowd's temperature to SARS level.

But when they started singing, Nievera and Velasquez made beautiful music together. Their medley of original Filipino duets "Umagang Kay Ganda," "Magkasuyo Buong Gabi," "Kailangan Ko, Kailangan Mo," and "I Don't Love You Anymore" sounded so good with Nievera's controlled power and Velasquez's piercing vocals. And when they launched into a Josh Groban medley, highlighted by "The Prayer," they could have ended the show right there and no one would have complained.

Rock range

For nearly three hours, the two singers had ample opportunity for solo showcases, and Velasquez, I felt, made the most of it, choosing to do her own songs like "Dadalhin" and other movie hits, which were well appreciated by the fans.

In contrast, apart from "Chasing Time," Nievera chose to do mostly covers, including the current smash "If You're Not the One," which sounded a bit off, and a medley of Creed's "My Sacrifice" and Aerosmith's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing."

While Nievera has the range for such rock numbers, he somehow didn't get the attitude right such that he completely missed out on the angst and regret of "My Sacrifice," which I personally consider one of the saddest rock songs I've heard.

The concert, in fact, was structured pretty much like a Martin Nievera show, which means that there's got to be one inspirational number, which in this case was a yet unreleased peace song for soldiers, never mind that Saddam Hussein's regime had already been toppled.

That it sounded too much like a Josh Groban song also somehow made it less effective in tugging at the heart strings, at least for this reviewer. My companion, in fact, admitted that she dozed off during this number.

Standing ovation

And, of course, what would a Martin Nievera show be without a Broadway medley? In "Voices," Nievera and Velasquez did a whole suite of "Miss Saigon" songs, which turned out to be a real show stopper. This time around, they picked a couple of songs from "West Side Story" and "Jekyll and Hyde," plus Velasquez' haunting rendition of "Not While I'm Around" from "Sweeney Todd," and Nievera's oh-so-casual musing of "If She Really Knew Me" from "They're Playing Our Song," before ending in a bombastic arrangement of "Somewhere," that's guaranteed to generate a standing ovation.

They got a standing ovation.

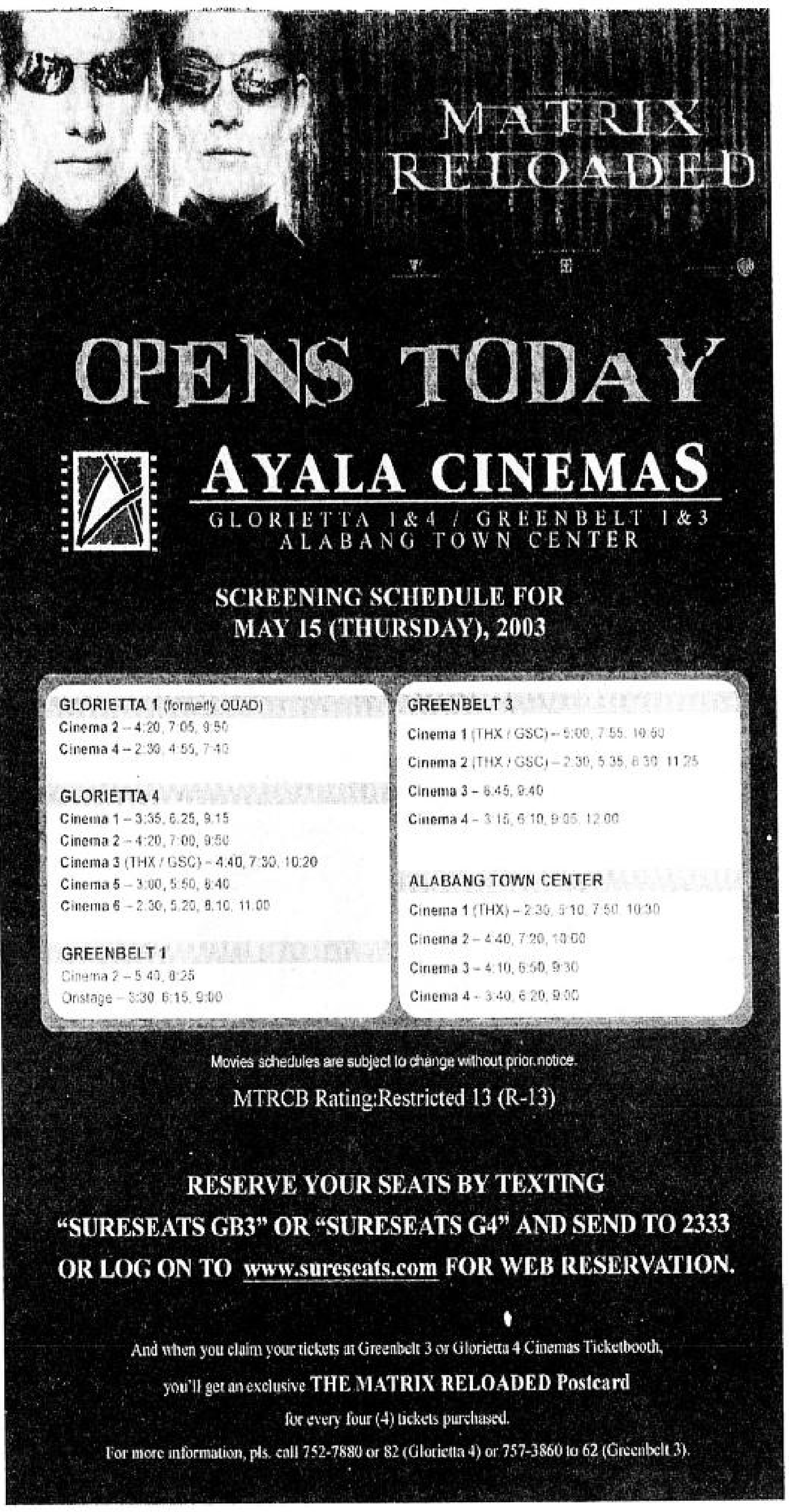
Despite the Nievera-esque lineup, Velasquez had truly outstanding moments, notably her over-the-top rendition of Nievera's "Ikaw ang Lahat sa Akin," which would certainly more than please her loyalists, plus a passionate version of "Kailangan Kita" from the Aga Muhlach-Claudine Barretto movie.

Velasquez's voice was definitely in tip-top condition that night and she belted out songs effortlessly, much to the delight of her followers.

About music

Nievera had another funny moment when he tried to emulate Velasquez's high-flying vocal acrobatics using a screeching falsetto, which the crowd lapped up. Velasquez has her share of detractors who wail about her

NO SPARKS/ A31



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Cinema 5 – 3:00, 5:50, 8:40
Cinema 6 – 2:30, 5:20, 8:10, 11:00

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 2 – 5:40, 8:25
Onstage – 3:30, 6:15, 9:00

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1 (THX / GSC) – 5:00, 7:55, 10:50
Cinema 2 (THX / GSC) – 2:30, 5:35, 8:30, 11:25
Cinema 3 – 6:45, 9:40
Cinema 4 – 3:15, 6:10, 9:05, 12:00

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) – 2:35, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30
Cinema 2 – 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
Cinema 3 – 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
Cinema 4 – 3:40, 6:20, 9:00

Movies schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

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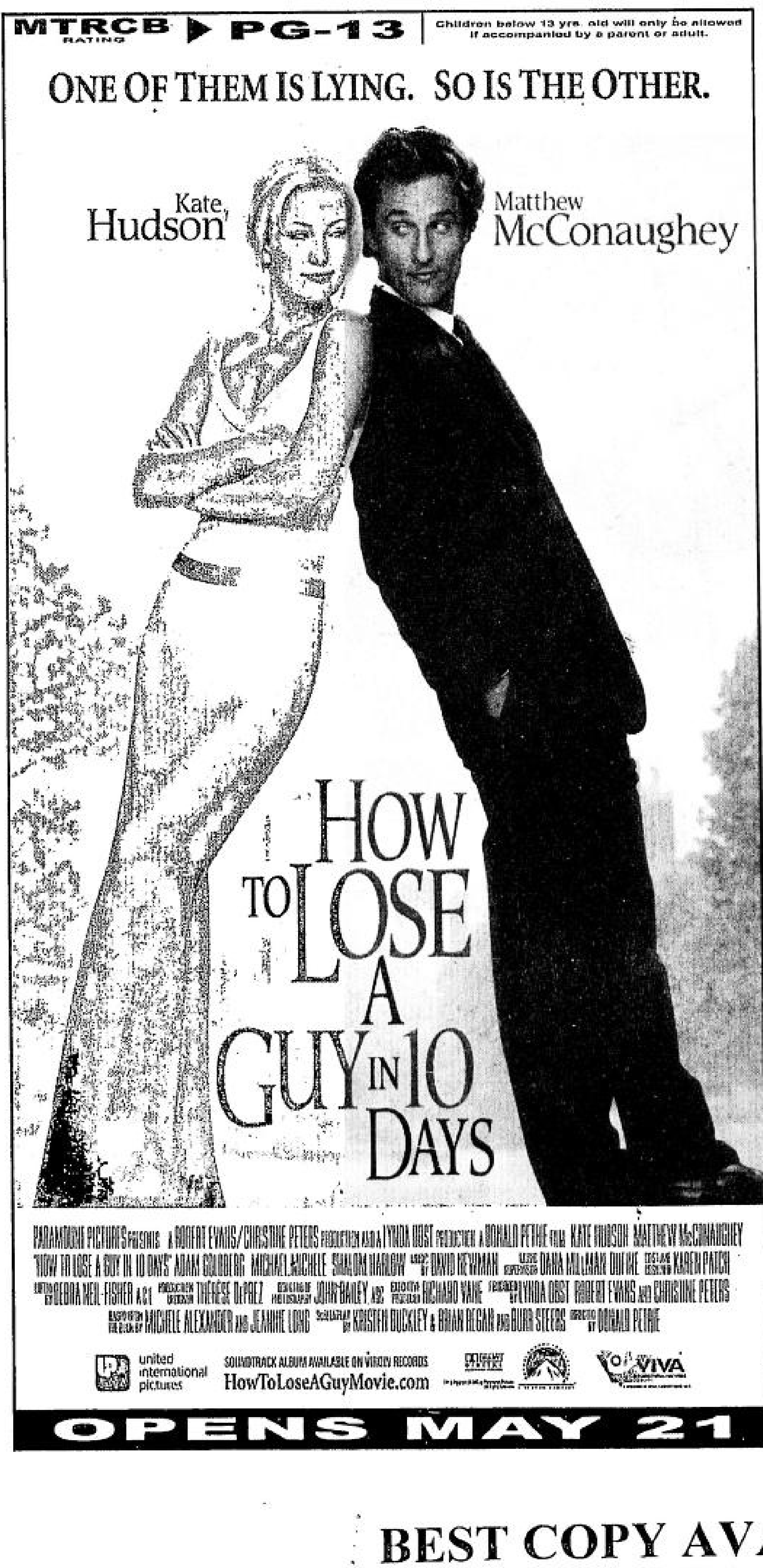

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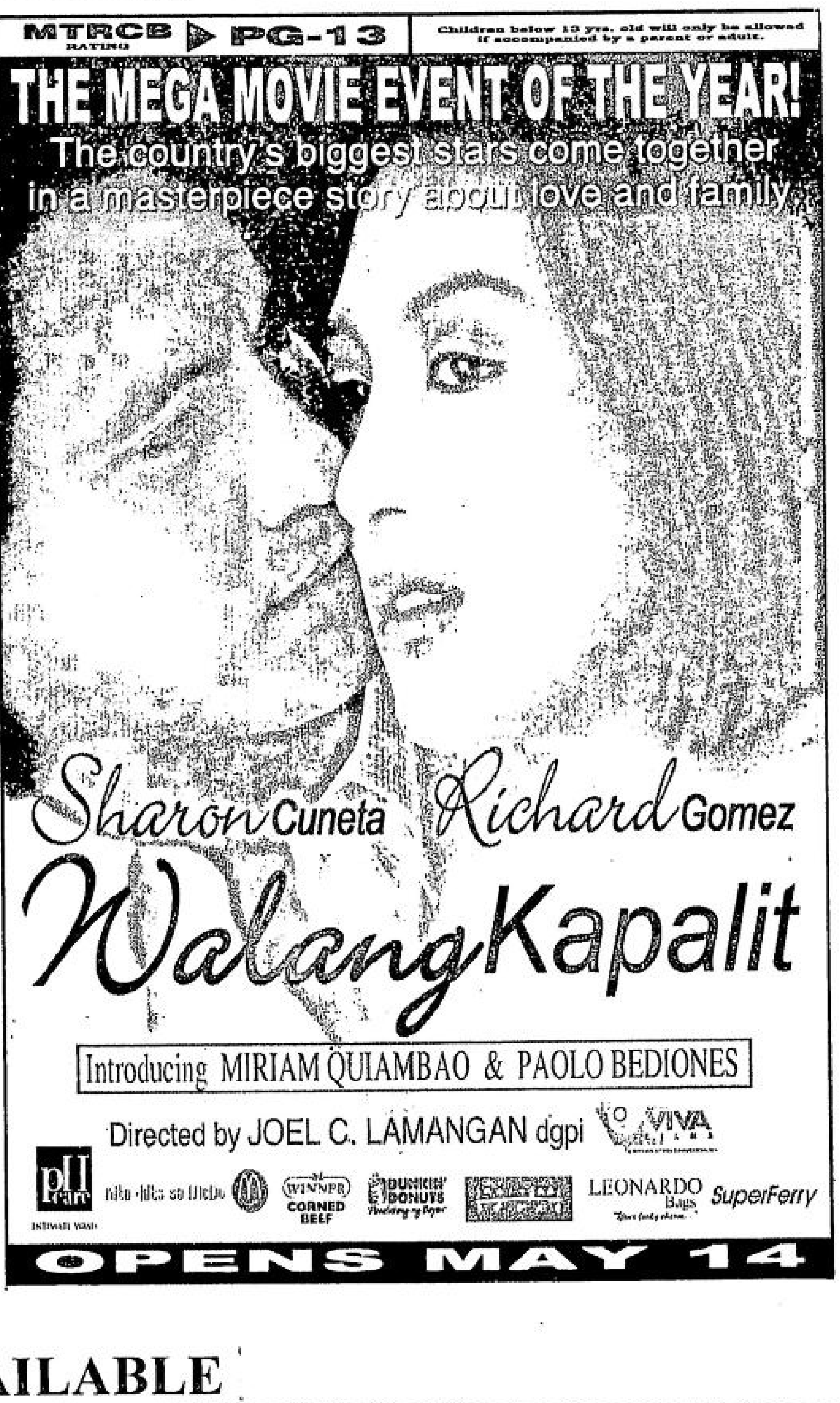

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Aries Espinosa, Editor

Food fusion of East and West

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TAGAYTAY, known as the "Garden City in the Sky," is brought to life by the vibrant hues in the sky with every sunrise and sunset and the green foliage of the mountains contrasted by the vivid colors of wildflowers. There must be something about the view of Taal Volcano that makes people go back again and again. The awe-inspiring sights, soothing mist of clean, cool mountain air blend to sustain Tagaytay's enchantment as relished from the site of Taal Vista Hotel.

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The other properties under the helm of the Barceló Group are The Barceló Pearl Farm Island Resort in Samal Island, Barceló Sarabia Monor Hotel in Iloilo City, Barceló Asturias Hotel in Puerto Princesa and Barceló Eagle Point Resort in Batangas. For inquiries and reservations, call their Manila Sales Office at Tel. No.: (63 2) 867 1159 and for Café-on-the-ridge call (6346) 413 1000. You can visit the website at www.barcelo-asia.com.

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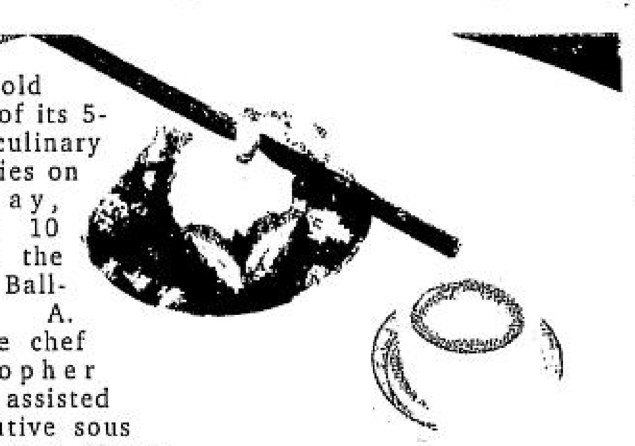
Satisfying gastronomic cravings at the Bellevue

GOOD food doesn't always come with a hefty price tag. Satisfying gastronomic urges and cravings will come easy to those who know where to look. At the Bellevue Hotel, the first and only business hotel South of Metro Manila, an unbelievably good lunch deal is offered to distinctive diners. Imagine a delightful meal of tasty soup, the freshest salad, pasta with your choice of flavorful sauce, luscious carving and lip-smacking dessert all for P290! Not only that, you get to dine in style at the hotel's main dining room, the Café d' Asie Asian Specialty Restaurant which boasts of a warm, relaxed ambiance. Cool earth tones with wood, copper and marble motifs are enhanced with the glow of natural sunlight. The delightful interplay of colors from flowering plants and interesting artworks make the room seem alive and breathing.

Many businessmen in the area and ladies who lunch are already flocking to The Bellevue for their power lunches and social meetings. Café d' Asie also offers authentic Asian cuisine featuring the culinary favorites from Singapore, Indonesia and other Asian countries.

Come and enjoy the 5-star treatment at affordable prices, only at the Bellevue Hotel.

Island Café specialties featured at Makati Shangri-La's cooking class



MAKATI Shangri-La will hold the last of its 5-course culinary class series on Saturday, May 24, 10 a.m. at the Quezon Ballroom A. Executive chef Christopher Romine, assisted by executive sous chef Thomas Figove, and executive pastry chef Xavier Castello will do a step-by-step demonstration of three dishes from the popular Island Café namely: Pumpkin Crème Soup with Basil Pesto for appetizer and Steamed Seabass with Hot Soy Sesame Vinaigrette for the main dish. The session's dessert feature will be Banana and Cherry Crumble. The class is priced at P1,100 net. Participants will receive a complete and specially-made Culinary Academy apron and chefs hat plus a kit containing printed and CD-ROM versions of the menu. At the end of the session, attendees will be treated to lunch at Island Café consisting of the demonstrated menu.

For inquiries and reservations, call Makati Shangri-La's Restaurant Reservations and Information Center at 840-0884 or 813-8888 extension 7588/ 7599.

Vietnamese hot pot at Dusit Hotel Nikko

DUSIT Hotel Nikko's Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant continues to draw in Manila's most discriminating diners and health buffs alike since it opened in April 2001. This favorite Vietnamese Restaurant, well-known for serving healthy and delicious dishes, features the diverse flavors of authentic Vietnamese Cuisine in a unique and interesting blend of Asian and French tastes and textures in a deluxe setting.

For the month of May, Dusit's Thien Duong adds "Thang Long" Vietnamese Hot Pot to its menu selection for lunch or dinner. Popularly priced at P750.00++ (good for 2 persons), guests may savor a delectable variety of seafood, chicken, pork, vegetables and glass noodles cooked the traditional Vietnamese way – using minimal oils with the distinct fusion of refreshing flavors of fresh herbs served with condiments and garnishes for diners to add according to their own tastes. Special group rates of P2,600.00++ for a group of 4 and P3,600.00++ for a group of 6 persons availing of lunch or dinner are offered with complimentary round of Vietnamese Iced Tea.

Thien Duong, which means "paradise" in Vietnamese, is the only fine dining restaurant in the Philippines that offers extraordinary Vietnamese cuisine in a five-star hotel which is exclusive to the Dusit Hotels and Resorts chain.

Located at the ground level of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant welcomes diners from Mondays to Sundays for lunch and dinner – 12:00nn – 2:30 pm and 6:00pm – 10pm.

For inquiries and reservations, please call (632) 867-3333 extension 3354 or e-mail: dusitmnl@dusit.com.

People, Events & Products

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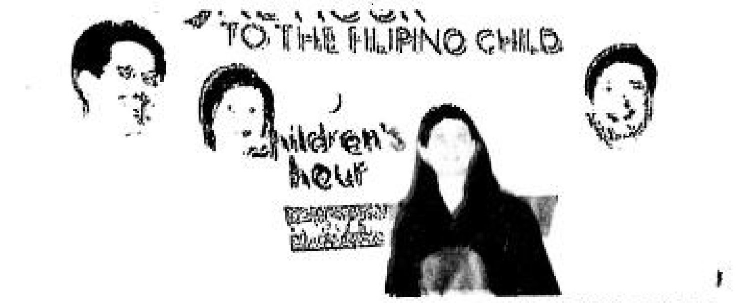
Cibo, represented by Albert Samañego, recently turned over its donation to CH Chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II. Present are Steer com members Bob Gothong, Cora Alma de Leon, Dr. Patricia Licuanan, Justo Ortiz, Susana Madrigal, and former UN Ambassador Bienvenido Tan Jr.



SALT & LIGHT VENTURES SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S HOUR

Salt and Light Ventures CEO Ardy Roberto (extreme left) with managing director Tingting Roberto and Dickie Soriano (extreme right) presented their donation to Children's Hour. Joining them was Children's hour steering com member Sandy Prieto-Romualdez.

Urian claims it's difficult inviting ABS-CBN stars

By Leah Salterio

PIOLO Pascual may be facing a grand-slam win as the previous year's best supporting actor, for Chito Roño's "Dekada '70," if and when he wins the Urian award on Saturday, May 17, but will he be able to attend the awards show?

There's talk that Piolo might not be present in the Urian show because he is among the ABS-CBN stars that the network is preventing from attending the event.

The Urian awards show is being produced by Tony Tuviera's APT Entertainment. Tuviera is also the producer of the top-rating noontime show, "Eat Bulaga," aired on on GMA 7.

But ABS-CBN TV executive Deo Endrinal told INQUIRER Entertainment the network has not issued any directive telling their contract stars not to attend the Urian awards night.

Endrinal pointed out that in fact, Kris Aquino, who is also nominated for best supporting actress for Joel Lamangan's "Mano Po," will attend the show.

"We don't want to jeopardize Piolo's chances by not making him attend the Urian awards night," Endrinal said. "The only problem is his schedule and we are now fixing it. We will make sure he'll be there. We are even trying to accommodate the request for him to do a production number in the show."

The Manunuri members have complained they were having a hard time getting ABS-CBN talents to grace the awards night.

They said Nora Aunor, whom they wanted to videotape for the tribute to scriptwriter Ricky Lee, declined the request of the show's production staff.

Surprise

The Manunuri critics are aware that Nora cannot be at the awards night since she has a birthday concert, "Gold," at the Araneta Coliseum also on Saturday. But they were surprised when Nora said she had to tape for her ABS-CBN soap, "Bituin," so she didn't have time to do the videotape greeting for Lee.

Lee wrote the scripts for some of Nora's critically acclaimed and award-winning films.

ABS-CBN owns the TV right to Nora's birthday concert, which the network will air as a TV special.

Endrinal denied that the network had told Nora not to do the videotape greeting for Lee.

The Urian will hold its awards night at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. The show will be aired on RPN 9.

Piolo's moving turn as a young communist in "Dekada '70" has earned him the best supporting trophies from all the major award giving groups.

Piolo is expected to achieve a clean sweep of the awards by winning the Urian trophy also.

In the Urian, Piolo is up against veterans Johnny Delgado ("Kailangan Kita") and Tirso Cruz ("Mano Po"), as well as fellow young actors Jeffrey Quizon ("Utang ni Tatang") and Jay Manalo ("Mano Po").

> 'The only problem is Piolo's schedule and we are now fixing it, but we will make sure he'll be there'

No sparks ...

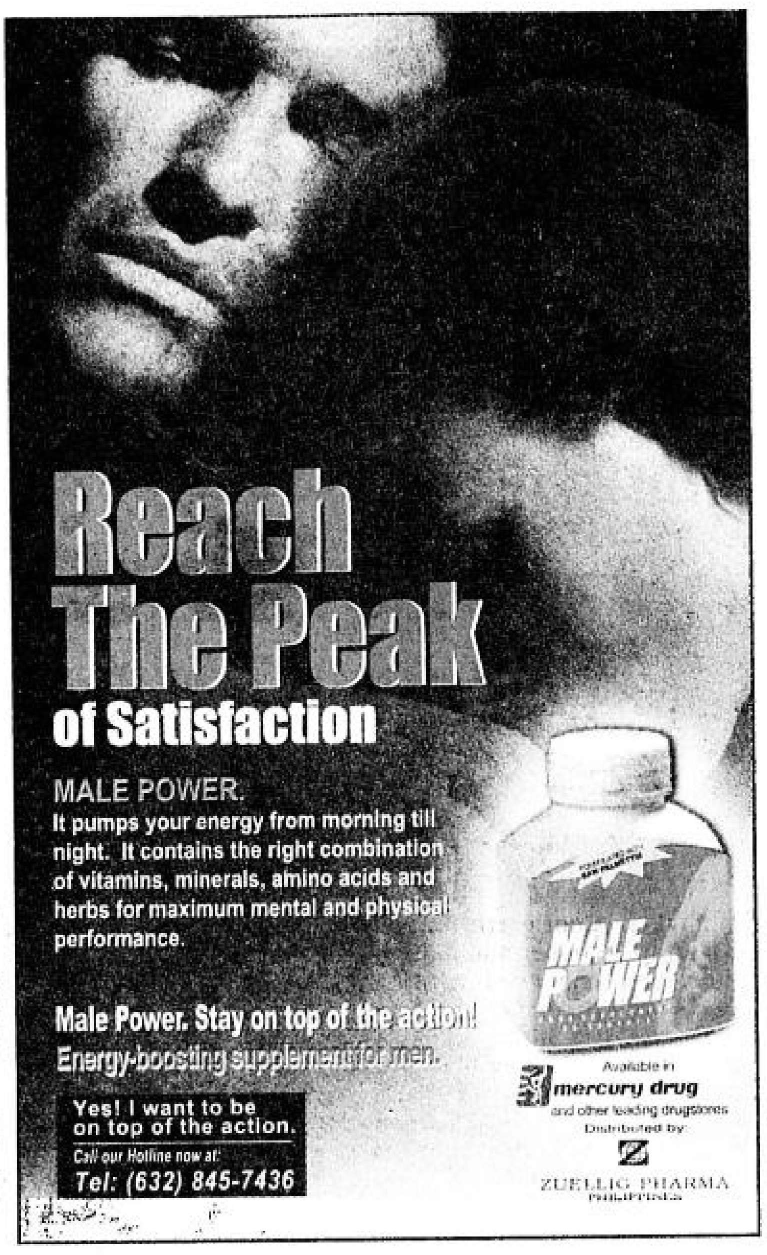
From page A29

belting style, although this vocal trademark is exactly the same quality that endeared her to her fans. My take is that she has thankfully learned to use this technique more efficiently and has added more texture to her style.

The encores had the crowd in high spirits, with "Forever," their only recorded duet, and "On the Wings of Love," with their soaring vocals that aptly brought the show to a close.

Nievera and Velasquez may have a dry asexual onstage chemistry, but this is one concert that is really more about singing. Not only do these two performers have proven marquee appeal, they also possess powerful voices.

The "2003 World Concert Tour" was truly a real double treat. It wasn't just a sound investment on the part of Maxi-Media International. For concert goers, it also provided very good value for money.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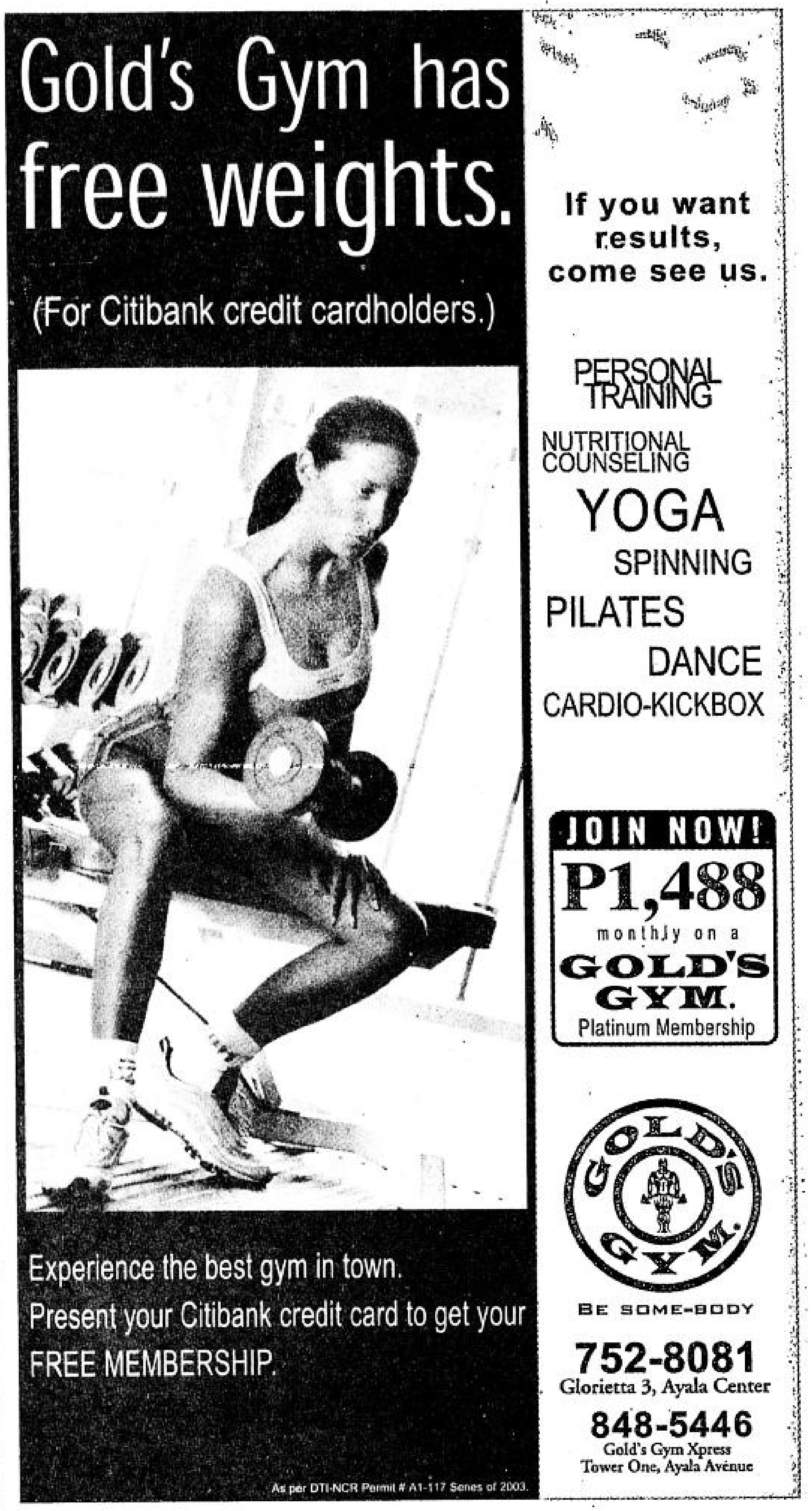
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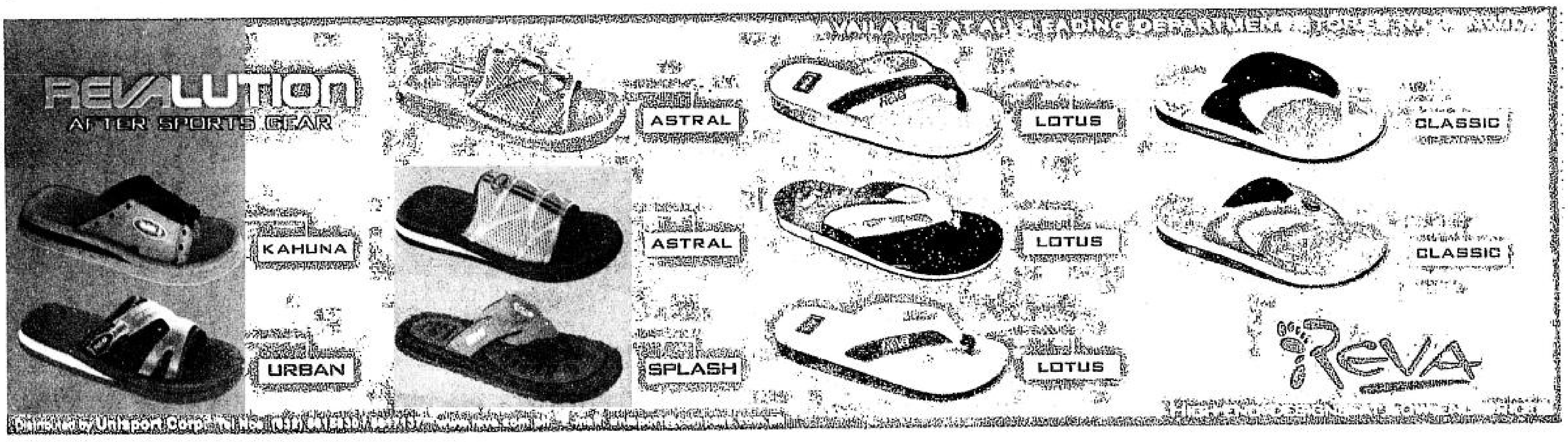

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May 17 & 24	Saturday	**CLOSED** for a private function

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ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor
Louie C. Camino

Urian claims it's difficult inviting ABS-CBN stars

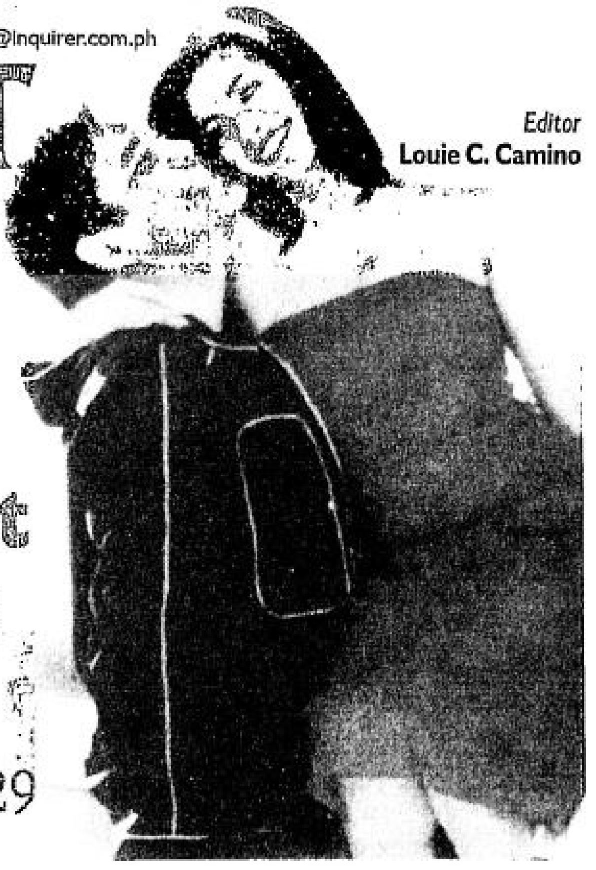
/A31

WILL network talents Piolo Pascual and Nora Aunor make it to the Urian show?

MARTIN-REGINE

No sparks flew, but viewers got good value for money

/A29



Aiko's new admirer is a younger Scotsman

/A28

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Farm sector growth slows to 2.79%

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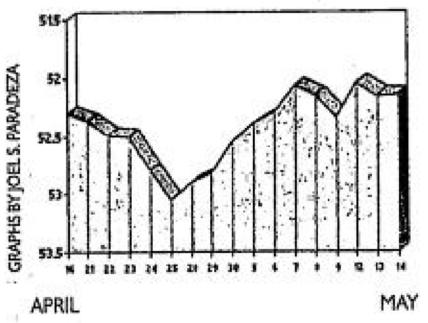

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As of 5 p.m., May 14, 2003

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As of 5 p.m., May 14, 2003

GOLD: $349.80-350.30

per ounce Hong Kong, May 14, 2003

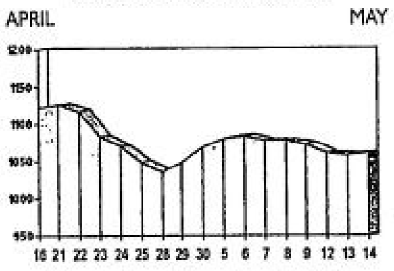
STOCK MARKET

Stocks end up

SHARES closed mildly higher yesterday led by selected blue chips, as a deadly bomb attack in Saudi Arabia weighed on market sentiment and limited the market's gains.

Brokers said market players were waiting for more cues, particularly from corporate earnings and the country's economic performance in the first quarter, before accumulating stocks.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Dominant food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp. led blue chips, gaining 0.91 percent to P55.50. Its "B" shares climbed 1.53 percent to P66.50 on optimism about its expansion plans in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Philippine stock index added 2.99 points, up 0.28 percent, to close at 1,061.56 points after trading in a tight range of just seven points during the session.

Brokers said the lackluster trade in the market was likely to persist for the rest of the week.

"The market is really sluggish, waiting for more signals," said Joey Roxas, president of Eagle Equities Inc.

"The bombing in Riyadh was a dampener, and oil prices went up slightly because of that."

Turnover climbed to P301.17 million from Tuesday's P219.45 million. Despite the broad market's gains, losers outpaced gainers 27 to 17 while 37 issues were unchanged.

Fast-food firm Jollibee Foods Corp. lost 1.61 percent to end at P15.25 despite a higher-than-expected first-quarter net income growth of 32 percent year on year.

However, Eagle Equities' Roxas said Jollibee was "not exactly cheap" at current levels, with a price-earnings ratio of 12 times its full year 2003 projected profit of P1.2 billion.

Reuters

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE EL Niño weather disturbance slowed down the agriculture sector's growth in the first quarter to 2.79 percent from 5.24 percent in the same period last year.

The dry spell that persisted from January to March specifically affected the palay and fish production sectors.

Despite the slowdown, Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. said he was still sticking to the agency's earlier forecast that the sector would grow by 4 percent this year.

He said the "2.79-percent growth should be seen as a blessing to us because, even with an unfavorable climate, we've managed to move the agriculture sector forward." The farm sector accounts for a fifth of the entire economy as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP).

Lorenzo said he was confident that the agriculture sector remained on track to achieve the 3.36-4.31 percent growth target set by the government for 2003.

"We are (keeping) our original target because with the onset of the rainy season, there would be better opportunities for planting and growth," Lorenzo said.

He said that while the agency was short on funds for seed and fertilizer propagation, their close coordination with local government units would allow them to achieve this goal.

The Bureau of Agriculture Statistics said that the crops sub-sector grew by 2.79 percent, with the corn sector recording 21.93 percent compared to the 2.93 percent posted in the same period last year.

Palay production, however, was down by 0.81 percent from an 8.68-percent growth in 2002 due to the drought that hit major palay production areas in Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas and Region 12 composed of North Cotabato, Saranggani, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Cotabato City.

But substantial production gains had been attained by banana, coconut and abaca, bringing some relief to many farmers in Mindanao, Visayas and the Bicol region.

LORENZO

The poultry sub-sector also grew by 5.06 percent in the first quarter along with the livestock sector.

Budget deficit, ballooning debt, slow reforms worry US

THE UNITED States has expressed serious concern on the Philippine government's widening budget gap, a ballooning public debt, and the slow pace of important reforms.

The apprehensions were communicated by US Assistant Secretary of State Jim Kelly in a letter to Alberto del Rosario, Philippine envoy to Washington, ahead of the state visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the United States starting next week.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, who left for the US last night, said he would meet with US Treasurer John Snow today to update the latter on the state of the Philippine economy.

He said he would also squeeze into his schedule an investors' briefing to be sponsored by Salomon Smith Barney. Camacho said he had no intention of selling bonds during this no-deal roadshow.

The finance chief said he would also meet with officials of the California Public Employees' Retirement System during his trip to the United States to shore up confidence on the Philippine economy.

CalPERS, the biggest and most influential US pension fund, placed the country under a one-year cure period to address deficiencies. Failure to do so would lead to the pullout of CalPERS funds from the Philippines.

Camacho said he would take the opportunity to discuss with his counterparts in the US recent improvements in the fiscal sector particularly the turnaround in revenue collection this year.

In the first quarter, for instance, government collection exceeded the target of P131 billion by more than P6 billion. In April, performances of the bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs reportedly kept the budget deficit for the month below P10 billion.

The BIR, which collects 80 percent of the government's annual revenues, raised P50.38 billion against a target of P47.423 billion. Customs sustained its robust collection in April, bringing its four-month take to P35.645 billion, a level that was P5.019 billion or 16.4 percent higher than the P30.626-billion target for the period.

BUDGET/ B3

Tighter tax rule on 10-seater vehicles deferred

By Clarissa S. Batino

FOR the third and last time, the Department of Finance and the Bureau of Internal Revenue have agreed to defer the implementation of the tighter regulation on 10-seater vehicles to June 6 from an earlier schedule of May 19.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said that Congress must pass the law amending the tax structure on automobiles or the DOF and the BIR would be left with no choice but to implement a revenue regulation that would tighten the exemption of 10-seater vehicles from excise tax.

The two-week extension considered the absence of Sen. Ralph Recto, the main sponsor of the bill amending the tax structure on motor vehicles. Recto is in the United States attending a seminar on fiscal responsibility.

"We hope that when he gets back, we would see the bill passed," said Camacho.

The DOF and the BIR first deferred the effectivity of the regulation to March 31 from Feb. 16.

TIGHTER/B3

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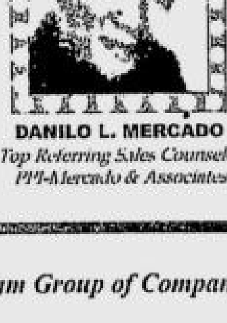

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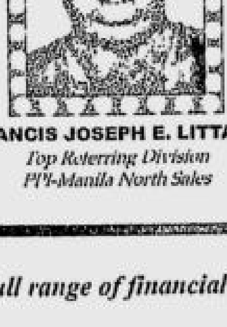

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Messages

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

My warmest greeting to the management, staff and awardees of **Philam Asset Management, Inc. (PAMI)** as you hold your 2nd *Annual PAMI Awards.*

As you reap the rewards of your exemplary efforts, I am pleased to note that you are enjoying the concrete benefits of our hard work as we rebuild the country and the economy. I have no doubt that the finance sector, where PAMI belongs, has contributed much to the positive growth we have posted.

PAMI, in particular, has consistently been at the forefront of delivering quality mutual fund investment services. May you, thus, remain committed to the values of integrity, accountability and innovation as you fulfill your social and economic responsibilities as a corporation.

Again, congratulations to the awardees and *Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary of Finance
Republic of the Philippines

Greetings to the officers and men of the Philam Asset Management, Inc. (PAMI) on the occasion of its Annual Recognition Night for the company's outstanding sales achievers.

I also commend the Philam Group of Companies for aggressively expanding its business in fund management through PAMI. A vibrant fund management industry is crucial to the development of our domestic capital market, and the presence of industry leaders like Philam help support this vibrance

Congratulations to PAMI's awardees for the Year 2002! I hope this outstanding sales achiever's award will inspire you to continue with your dedication, responsiveness and zeal in the pursuit of excellence in the field of financial services. As you pursue your personal and professional ambitions, know that you are contributing to our nation building.

Keep up the good work and more power!

LILIA R. BAUTISTA
Chairperson
Securities & Exchange Commission

The strength of the organization lies in its strongest link, its human resource component. This is an old maxim of ancient respectability whose very essence finds its application in the corporate wold today.

Your company has recognized the value of hard work and crucial importance of personnel performance through the awards being presented to you. By this recognition, your company considers you as role models for the rest of the organization's community to emulate.

I congratulate the awardees for work well done and encourage you to remain faithful to the ideals of social responsibility and observing fairness and concern for the public that puts its trust in you and your company. I further urge you to play by the three rules of good corporate governance, namely, fairness, accountability and transparency, for it is in the observance of these best practices that companies can strengthen their competitive edge and be ahead in crucial and trying business conditions.

Congratulations again, and more power!

Lilia R. Bautista

JOSE L. CUISIA, JR.
President and CEO
Philamlife

My warmest greetings to all our awardees from the Philam Group Agency Forces!

Through your dedication to your work and tremendous sales effort, you have brought Philam Asset Management, Inc. (PAMI) to unprecedented levels of sales, profitability, quality and value. Your commendable performance has strengthened PAMI's position in the mutual fund industry becoming one of the fastest-growing and leading asset management companies. We thank you for your valuable contribution to the company.

With the growing demand for financial products and services that cater to complex and diversified financial needs, it is my hope that you will all continue to equip yourselves with greater knowledge and skills on financial planning. By increasing your competence as investment advisors & financial planners, you become more competitive in the sales field and render more superior service to your clients.

Congratulations to all of you! May you continue to promote greater synergy and teamwork across the Philam Group of Companies.

Budget constraint seen affecting ODA-funded projects

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT has told Japanese donors it would be assuming a conservative stance in undertaking official development assistance projects being funded by the Japanese government for this year in view of the country's budgetary constraints.

Rolando Tungpalan, assistant director general for national development of the National Economic and Development Authority, said that in a meeting between the government panel and Japanese representatives yesterday, the former said it would not expand its ODA request from Japan as a fiscal discipline move.

The government panel and Japan are set to confirm this year's lineup of ODA projects and programs under Japan's 27th yen loan package on May 26.

"Government line agencies have been advised that the budget for the next three years will only be at the same level as last year's, and therefore we won't likely expand our ODA commitments," Tungpalan said in an interview.

He explained that in the absence of any expansion, the government would likely endorse ODA projects whose amount would almost be the same, if not lower, as those of last year's. The government's project and program endorsements under Japan's 26th yen loan package last year stood at $238.57 million.

Tungpalan said the same stance has been taken by the government in committing ODA projects and programs with other foreign donors, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

"We explained to them (Japanese representatives) the government's need to adhere to its fiscal program and the need to ensure that line agencies spend within the budget ceiling," Tungpalan said.

In yesterday's meeting, the government panel was composed of representatives from the Departments of Budget and Management and of Finance, and the Neda, with Tungpalan as head. The Japanese panel was headed by Takashi Hoshiyama, counselor of the Embassy of Japan.

Budget deficit . . .

From page B1

Last year, the budget gap swelled to P210.7 billion against a target of P130 billion and the previous year's P147 billion.

As the government borrowed heavily to breach the gap between spending and revenues, the public debt rose to P2.81 trillion in 2002. As of February, the government's debt stock reached P2.906 trillion, a level 19 percent more compared to the previous year.

Reforms, according to the US official, have not been moving well. Pending before Congress are several bills seen important in improving the economy and increasing revenues.

Tighter . . .

From page B1

The amendments would change the basis of automobile excise taxation to price from engine displacement and fuel type. The proposed law would also lift the exemption of the so-called Asian utility vehicles and finally correct the loophole in automobile taxation where only 30 percent of the vehicles sold were covered by excise tax and the rest had been exempted.

If a law is passed before June 6, the government is likely to scrap the BIR regulation altogether and just wait for the effectivity of the amended legislation.

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UCPB @40

A new beginning

UCPB @ 40...

UCPB turns 40 today. When the bank first opened its doors for business in 1963 as the First United Bank (FUB), it was a medium-sized commercial bank with only four branches. The bank changed its name to UCPB in 1975, and within six years, it became the first private Philippine bank to be granted a license to operate as a universal bank.

Today, after 40 colorful and eventful years, UCPB has become one of the most diverse business groups in the country. It has subsidiaries engaged in thrift banking, rural banking, stock brokerage, and leasing and finance. It has affiliate companies engaged in life and non-life insurance and in the manufacture and export of consumer goods and industrial chemicals.

UCPB alone serves close to a million customers – individuals, small businesses, corporations and institutions – through a network of branches, regional offices and credit centers and through state-of-the-art electronic banking facilities that provide access to banking services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Through its UCPB-CIIF Foundation and the UCPB-CIIF Finance and Development Corp., the bank carries out social development programs that provide livelihood opportunities and values education to small coconut farmers and their families in over 20,000 barangays across the country.

...Marks A New Beginning

For UCPB, turning 40 means putting together the accumulated wisdom and experience during the last four decades to create an even more responsive financial services company that can deliver a wide range of products and services through a variety of channels.

UCPB's fundamental strength has always been its resilience, persistence and its commitment to service and innovation. And as changes continue to sweep the financial services industry, the bank is crafting a new blueprint for the future to meet the demands of a more sophisticated customer base.

Such changes will expand its product offerings to include providing financial advice. It will require employing new technology and harnessing emerging ones to allow customers to make informed decisions, as well as providing multiple delivery channels so they can do their banking anytime, anywhere, 24/7.

The groundwork for the future is already being laid out. In recent years, UCPB has been relocating its branches to better sites, upgrading its technology infrastructure, acquiring a new generation of ATMs, establishing self-service banking centers and introducing Internet-based banking services.

As UCPB celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, the bank vows to work harder to keep itself attuned to the evolving needs of its customers. For UCPB, life at 40 is the start of a new effort to nurture an even stronger relationship with the customers – it is, for the bank, a new beginning!

Messages

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
Roxas Boulevard Corner Vito Cruz Street
Manila 1004

Allow me to extend my warm wishes to the officers and staff of UCPB on the occasion of the bank's 40th anniversary.

As one of the country's leading financial services institution, and a major player in social development, UCPB has performed an important service to the nation during the last four decades. It has mobilized savings, provided funds for commerce, trade and industry, and small and medium sized businesses, and helped strengthen communities across the country.

I am heartened that UCPB chose "A New Beginning" as the theme for its anniversary celebration for this speaks of the bank's strong commitment to bring fresh and innovative ideas to the market, and to build on the relationship it has forged with its clientele.

More power to UCPB!

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Greetings to UCPB on its 40th year anniversary. Established as a commercial bank in 1963, UCPB evolved to become the country's first private universal bank in 1981.

Today, as the country strives to sustain its economic momentum and alleviate poverty in our land, the challenge to the officers and staff of UCPB is to redouble their efforts to contribute to national aspirations.

Indeed, these are trying times. In spite of the economic gains we have achieved, there is still so much more that needs to be done. The same can be said of UCPB which is a vital ally of our coconut industry.

I therefore wish all the officers and staff a meaningful celebration of UCPB's 40th year anniversary.

RAFAEL B. BUENAVENTURA
Governor

UCPB

We celebrate UCPB's 40th anniversary today by reaffirming our commitment to create value for our customers. The customers are our lifeblood. The trust and confidence that they have vested in our institution motivate us to constantly innovate and look for novel ways to deliver service that exceeds their expectations.

For UCPB, providing excellent service is a way of life. It is part of our corporate culture. And as the institution moves forward and expands its delivery network to reach more people, we shall make sure that the customers will receive the same level of service that is predictable in its reliability and quality across all channels.

As UCPB marks another milestone in its corporate life, we would like express our gratitude to all those who kept faith in the institution. We are confident that our partnership with them will grow even stronger in the years to come.

EDWARD S. GO
Chairman and CEO

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Implementation of $844M worth of projects OKd

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT and the World Bank have approved the implementation of $843.5 million worth of official development assistance programs and projects in the country in the next two years.

During a meeting last Monday, the government panel and country representatives of the World Bank confirmed 14 projects for financing by the multilateral agency. The projects are in the areas of public and finance sector development, agrarian reform, natural resources, social reform development and infrastructure.

According to Jonathan Uy, director for public investment of the National Economic and Development Authority, program loans for finance sector strengthening involve administrative reforms in the areas of tax administration and financial management. Program loans for public sector reform would include enhancement of government bureaucracy.

For 2004, the lineup includes the Rural Power Project, Judicial Reform Support Project, Laguna de Bay Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation Project, Public Finance Strengthening, Women's Health II, Urban Shelter and Community Infrastructure Project, and Land Administration and Management Project.

For 2005, the projects include Public Sector Reform, Health Sector Reform, Diversified Farm Income/Agriculture Modernization, Manila Third Sewerage Project, Cities Development Project, Community-Managed Agrarian Reform, and Mindanao Rural Development Project.

Also for funding by the World Bank are two more projects for 2005 whose implementation has yet to be confirmed.

Landbank posts ₱576M in profit

By Elena R. Torrijos

LAND Bank of the Philippines posted a profit of P576 million in the first quarter of this year, slightly higher than the P568 million recorded in the same period last year.

The first quarter performance puts the bank on track in meeting its P1.8-billion profit target for the whole year, although pressure from the national government for it to advance billions of pesos for land reform could derail the bank's performance.

Landbank president Margarito Teves said the profit was achieved despite an 18-percent drop in loan revenue and a 55-percent increase in loan provisioning.

"The growth in profit came largely from Landbank's income from treasury operations, which increased by 6 percent from P1.87 billion to P1.98 billion, and the sharp reduction in the cost of funds," Teves explained.

Teves, however, clarified that the P576 million in profit in the first quarter could go down by P292 million if the bank had to fully absorb the 10-percent value added tax.

Landbank officials also disclosed that the bank would allocate P1 billion in funds for capital expenditures this year to improve its technology infrastructure and renovate its branch network.

Out of the P1 billion, Landbank said P401 million would be allocated for information technology-related expenditures.

Landbank announced that its non-performing loans decreased from 22 percent March last year to 17.6 percent in the same month this year.

Conservative loan provisioning also brought the bank's NPL coverage ratio to 61.5 percent end-March from 52 before.

In the quarter, Landbank's deposits also grew by nearly P19 billion to P189.7 billion from the level the year before and total assets rose 9 percent to P256.8 billion. Capital went up by 4 percent to P20.7 billion from P19.9 billion.

Sorsogon reviving seaweed industry

SORSOGON CITY—Sorsogon seaweed farmers are reviving the local seaweed industry after the province was chosen the pilot area for President Macapagal-Arroyo's National Seaweed Program (NSP).

In a Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries Council (PAFC) meeting on Thursday, local industry leaders saw more earnings for seaweed farmers this time owing to the increased demands in the market.

Seaweeds, especially the carageenan powder, have many uses.

Oscar Monzales, secretary general of the Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines (Siap), said carageenan powder, which can be derived from the eucheuma cottonii seaweed, could be used as a gelling, stabilizing and binding agent.

Siap is the private sector partner of government agencies that promotes technology, market and other plans and programs for the implementation of the NSP.

About 2,000 hectares of seaweed planting area in Sorsogon could yield 600 tons of dried seaweed, which can be sold to the National Seaweed Technology Development Center (NSTDC) and the other processors here or overseas. Dried seaweeds sell for P24 to P30 a kilo in the local market.

Monzales said SIAP would be conducting workshops by June in different municipalities after obtaining the list of farmers interested in seaweed planting from PAFC. *Emir Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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PEOPLE invest in the stock market. Always. And so when they ask you what they can do now with their worthless Cyberbay stocks, just tell them it was all their ... well, fault.

That is an excellent piece of advice. After all, they only must write off their investment in Cyberbay. The Supreme Court turned against them. Again.

In the news lately was the Supreme Court decision, penned by Justice Antonio Carpio himself, who used to be with THE firm, i.e. the Carpio Villaraza Cruz law office.

Carpio just erased a multibillion-peso contract between the publicly listed Cyberbay (formerly Amari) and the government firm PEA. The contract was eight years old.

For the stockholders of Cyberbay, therefore, it meant goodbye to their investment. As somebody big in the Supreme Court said, they should have exercised due diligence.

Hmm. In other words, it was their fault. Investors in the stock market, as a rule, should be able to see into the far distant future. What is so hard about that? Duh.

Even Madame Auring can see the future. Thus, stock market investors should always be able to predict that the Supreme Court would blind side them eight years later.

* * *

FROM what I gather, some big influential business groups may yet go for the Cha-cha, if only to clip the power of the Supreme Court.

When that Carpio-penned decision came out, for instance, it did not go unnoticed—or even uncommented on—by the influential Makati Business Club.

The Carpio decision brought to mind, at least to those in big business, the other famous showcases of the Supreme Court's awesome power over private business deals.

A couple of them were the cases of Manila Bulletin's Emilio Yap on the Manila Hotel, and of the petrochemical project of a Taiwanese company.

In the Manila Hotel case, the Supreme Court declared Yap as the winner of the bidding for the hotel property. In short, it acted as the seller.

In the petrochemical project, it decided for the proponents where the very same proponents should put up their own factory. Thus, it served as the project engineer.

To one banker, such famous cases were only possible because, under the Constitution, the Supreme Court can simply butt in on just about anything.

Unfortunately, I forgot to ask the source that, since the Cha-cha can clip its power, whether or not the Supreme Court has the power to stop the Cha-cha.

* * *

NOW Justice Josue Bellosillo had some strong words on the Carpio-penned decision.

But his was just one of three dissenting opinions. In Supreme Court lingo, dissenting opinions really just mean, well, "so what!" They are only for the record.

Anyway, Bellosillo had this to say: "Giving petitioner Chavez a full recognition of his right to access matters of public concern is a correct step in the appropriate direction."

To explain, I must say that Chavez is Frank Chavez, whose client filed a collection case in the lower court for his, er, "commission" in the PEA-Amari contract.

He is the same Chavez who went to the Supreme Court to order PEA and Amari to become transparent on their deal.

Clearly, with such a simple request, any Supreme Court justice such as Carpio would have no choice but to go to extremes by scrapping the contract altogether.

And so referring to the request of Chavez, Bellosillo adds: "The ponencia (i.e. Carpio) should have cut and cut clean there as we must do now.

"Anything beyond that, as the ponencia has done, is ivory-tower and unaccountable interventionism at its worst." Oooh!

* * *

BUT the voting went 8 to 5 in favor of Carpio, meaning that seven other justices, ah, "concurred" with him. In their lingo, "concurred" means you just sign your name, period.

By the way, Carpio was the first presidential legal adviser of Kuya Eddie, who did many other contracts similar to the PEA-Amari's. *Di ba, Joe?*

Among them were reclamation projects of R2 Builders, owned by Reggis Romero, in Smokey Mountain, and of course the reclamation of Shoemart's Henry Sy.

Still, nobody can say now why Carpio did not think of those similar transactions as null and void at that time. For why else did he not insist on not doing them?

This time, anyway, he enjoyed to concurrence of seven other justices. The Supreme Court thus wins, while the stockholders of Cyberbay lose.

The defeat of the stockholders, as I said, came in the form of signatures. By just signing your name, you do not even have to say what you think.

Look at that—just sign your name. And to think, the business community is already aghast over some cases handled by the Supreme Court.

In other words, it is under attack. Signing something may not be mortal sin, but the signatures of those magnificent seven killed not only the Cyberbay stockholders but a lot of business confidence. What is that—mortal sign?

Me, if I am under attack, particularly to the point of my integrity being questioned, I think I will want to explain my decision. There's nothing much to say when you just sign, is there?

* * *

RUMORS are going around in business that three Cabinet members are practicing what we know down here as "one money."

Only one of them, according to the rumors, is a lawyer.

* * *

THOSE smoke emission tests, as required by the LTO when you renew your vehicle registration, are not cheap. You just have to do them.

But how come, despite the compulsory tests, we still see a lot of smoke belchers in the streets of Metro Manila. Hmm. Something must be wrong here.

Even the LTO smells something. It wants you to rat on the smoke emission testing centers. LTO promises immediate action.

* * *

NOT immediate though is the action of the LTO against an insurance company which issued 10 copies of vehicle insurance with the same serial number.

The LTO discovered that the insurance company distributed that same insurance cover to its agents who were stationed at different LTO offices.

The practice is rampant. According to the Insurance Commission, based on the existing numbers of insurance covers for vehicles, only one out of three vehicles in the country is insured.

That means a lot of insurance companies are doing a lot of those ... well, re-issues.

* * *

SKYCABLE, says the National Telecommunications Commission, could not just change the designated channels of networks like GMA-7 in its cable television.

That was already the ruling of the NTC. In effect, Skycable violated the rules of NTC, which says you cannot just change the assigned channels.

But that was it. The NTC just made a ruling. Nobody is listening. It seems the ruling is just some sort of decoration.

And so GMA-7 now asks the NTC to impose sanction on three cable television companies, namely, Skycable, Sun Cable, and Home Cable.

GMA-7 wants NTC to fine those three, plus file cases of contempt (which means their offices can go to jail), and cancel their licenses. Let's see what the NTC can and will do.

PEP eyes tie-up with Next Mobile

By Doris C. Dumlao

PUBLICLY listed movie and entertainment outfit Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc. (PEP) is in talks with Next Mobile Philippines Inc. on a possible joint venture on a wireless data business.

The share price of PEP has been rising in the Philippine Stock Exchange this week, leading to a price freeze on Tuesday when the increase in the share price hit the 50-percent limit imposed by the bourse.

In a disclosure yesterday, PEP said it was in negotiations with Next Mobile on a possible tie-up but it did not provide details.

The prospective partnership signals the possible shift of PEP to the lucrative wireless communication business.

At present, PEP is into motion pictures and various forms of entertainment and leisure, including film production and exportation and distribution of films to both local and international film markets.

It was incorporated in 1988 as Premiere Films International, which became inactive until 1993, when it began a service called Roving Cinema. This involved the use of a mobile van equipped with a projector and other equipment for the screening of films. It was offered to multinational corporations as a vehicle for the promotion of consumer products in areas not effectively reached by traditional media.

Next Mobile, formerly Nextel Communications Philippines Inc., is a consortium that provides wireless data services to 35,000 subscribers across the Philippines, including radio paging systems, personal communications network, trunk radio systems and cellular mobile telephone systems. It has a network of 140 base stations covering Metro Manila and Southern Luzon.

The company is working closely with various business partners as well as its major supplier Motorola on product development and evolution of new services especially wireless data applications.

Next Mobile had also offered to acquire the majority holding in cash-strapped telecommunications firm Capitol Wireless Inc.

SM Prime posts 11% revenue rise

SM Prime Holdings said its gross revenues had increased by 11 percent to P2.05 billion in the first quarter of 2003 compared with the year-ago level of P1.85 billion.

Rental revenues was up 9 percent to P1.6 billion from P1.46 billion, while Cinema ticket sales increased to P363 million from P302 million in 2002.

The increase in cinema revenues is attributed to blockbuster movies shown during the first quarter of the year. Revenues from amusement operations grew 8 percent to P94 million from P88 million in the same period last year.

Operating expenses grew by 12 percent due to higher cost of film rentals and the increase in depreciation expense because of the opening of new malls. Income before tax amounted to P1.27 billion, 12.6 percent higher than the P1.12 billion last year.

AMA to float ₱1.5B in IT bonds

By Abigail L. Ho

INFORMATION technology school AMA Computer University Inc. is expected to float P1.5 billion in IT bonds "in the next few weeks" to fund the first phase of a P5-billion "IT university town" project in Cavite.

First Metro Investment Corp., a unit of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., has been tapped to underwrite the bond flotation.

AMA vice president for marketing and communications Johnny Ramos said in a briefing yesterday that the bonds would pay for the first phase of the project as well as for other expansion plans that the company would undertake in the coming months.

The IT university town, or Telepolis, is a 50-hectare property in Gen. Trias, Cavite, that will house an AMA Computer University campus, student dormitories and even commercial establishments.

It follows the concept of Harvard and iCarnegie in the United States where the IT university campus is actually located within a community.

Ramos said the Cavite property had already been acquired. The project would be done in various phases, the first one being the school's construction. The school will likely be opened next year.

In the meantime, STI Education Services Group unit Information and Communications Technology Academy Inc. (iAcademy) yesterday filed a libel case against AMA Educational Systems Holdings Inc. for publishing newspaper ads warning the public that "any representation made by iAcademy or its affiliates as partners of iCarnegie was false, misleading and deceitful."

In a three-page complaint filed with the Makati City Prosecutor's Office, iAcademy dean and chief operations officer Mitch Andaya pointed out that the ads published in three leading dailies caused "anxiety and apprehension to iAcademy's students and enrollees and their parents."

PNOC earns ₱1B from service contracts

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Energy Development Corp. yesterday said it earned P1.1 billion from third party service contracts in the second half of last year.

The earnings came mostly from PNOC-EDC's drilling and consultancy services rendered to Papua New Guinea's Lihir Management Corp., Gulf Indonesia and Philippine Geothermal Inc.

PNOC-EDC chair and president Sergio Apostol said in a statement that the firm's income from drilling projects had been increasing by an average of 10 percent yearly.

In 2002, it posted P249.2 million in drilling income, an increase of about 12 percent from P222.6 in 2001.

Apostol said the bulk of last year's drilling revenues came from the Lihir contracts.

PNOC-EDC had just concluded its third contract with the Papua New Guinea-based company, which covered drilling of geothermal, steam relief and "dewatering" of wells as well as maintenance work on nine other wells.

Apostol said PNOC-EDC was eyeing new contracts with Lihir for goethermal drilling services and steam field development.

"We are confident that we can secure a new contract," he said. "PNOC-EDC leads other drilling contractors of Lihir in terms of timeliness, safety and cost-efficiency."

INTEREST RATES

May 14, 2003- MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 14-May-03 (%)	MART1 13-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.1615	7.1729
3 Months	7.1625	7.1932
6 Months	8.1923	8.2885
1 Year	8.6654	8.6977
2 Years	9.1385	9.3159
3 Years	10.125	10.2827
4 Years	10.8615	10.9519
5 Years	11.1212	11.2808
7 Years	11.6058	11.8385
10 Years	11.9025	12.3942
20 Years	12.8846	13.0654
25 Years	13.4058	13.5673

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, May 14, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	15.25	15.25	15.25	15.25	1,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35.5	35.5	35	35.5	3,614,300
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.75	161,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27	26.5	27	23,800
Philippine National Bank	23.75	24	23.75	24	10,000
Phil. Savings Bank	22	26.5	22	26.5	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	24,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	18,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.4	32,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1420	1425	1420	1425	880
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1040	1060	1040	1060	4,150
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	11,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	680,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	0.35	0.35	0.35	.35	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	580	580	580	580	7,850
Ipeople Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	130,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	2,900,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	407.5	407.5	402.5	405	25,970
Ivantage Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	300,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	.012	21,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	93,000
Manila Electric Co. B	9.7	10	9.7	10	852,000
Petron Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.04	2.06	959,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	15,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	269,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	590,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	5,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	26,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28	28	27	27	113,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.25	704,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55.5	54	55.5	454,100
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	67	65.5	66.5	309,300
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	329,900
Universal Robina Corp.	4	4	4	4	3,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	50,000
Ayala Corp.	4.1	4.15	4.1	4.15	2,455,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	65,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	8,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.16	2.2	2.1	2.18	122,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.195	0.195	0.19	.195	4,300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.195	.195	650,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.1	300,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8	8.1	8	8	61,000
Ionics Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.63	.63	890,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	68,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.16	.16	1,370,000
Music Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	300,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.095	.095	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.5	.5	110,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	3,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	2	2	2	2	27,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.84	1.86	1.8	1.86	385,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	96,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	1,550,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	.31	10,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	.35	100,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.31	.32	1,420,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	.19	1,980,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	5,000
WGA - Preferred	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	18,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.75	4.8	4.7	4.7	4,661,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.125	0.12	.125	140,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.15	.15	330,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.81	0.82	17,780,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.04	0.055	0.04	.055	200,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	.145	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.85	3,253,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	.0032	350,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.185	0.185	0.185	.185	180,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.003	.003	13,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	.0034	2,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	38,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	60,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P) (P)
Bank & Fin Svc	3,893,930	137,592,385.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	55,454,220	109,318,235.00
PRO	26,564,000	52,566,400.00
Mining	365,180,000	1,200,100.00
OIL	99,000,000	266,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	550,092,150	300,943,120.00

DISCLOSURES

WELLEX Industries Inc. denied having any information that could explain the 40-percent decrease in its share price from P0.80 to P0.48 per share.

* * *

DIGITAL Telecommunications Philippines Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 26, 10 a.m. at the Amorsolo Ballroom of Manila Galleria Suites, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of March 31 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

KEPPEL Philippines Properties Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 10, 2 p.m. at the Boracay Room of Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City. Stockholders of record as of May 9 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

LORENZO Shipping Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 3, 9 a.m. at Dusit Hotel, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 27 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

MIC Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 16, 2 p.m. at the 8/F, DPC Place, Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 17, 4 p.m. at the 10/F of PBCom Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 9 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

F & J Prince Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 25 with record date of May 31. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 14, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.867754	1.000000	52.214000
Japan	Yen	0.007446	0.008581	0.448000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.397692	1.610700	84.101100
Hongkong	Dollar	0.111266	0.128223	6.695000
Switzerland	Franc	0.660542	0.761209	39.745800
Canada	Dollar	0.626086	0.721501	37.672500
Singapore	Dollar	0.500493	0.576768	30.115400
Australia	Dollar	0.560746	0.646204	33.740900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.301919	2.652731	138.509700
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.231401	0.266667	13.923800
Brunei	Dollar	0.499053	0.575109	30.028700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000119	0.006200
Thailand	Baht	0.020490	0.023613	1.232900
UAE	Dirham	0.236278	0.272287	14.217200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.152400	60.171400
Argentina	Peso	0.316122	0.364299	19.021500
Brazil	REAL	0.302037	0.348068	18.174000
Denmark	Kroner	0.134669	0.155193	8.103200
India	Rupee	0.018443	0.021254	1.109800
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.228387	0.263193	13.742400
Mexico	New Peso	0.085814	0.098892	5.163500
New Zealand	Dollar	0.499140	0.575209	30.034000
Norway	Kroner	0.126982	0.146334	7.640700
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015065	0.017361	0.906500
South Africa	Rand	0.118304	0.136333	7.118500
Korea	Won	0.000726	0.000837	0.043700
Sweden	Kroner	0.109078	0.125701	6.563400
Syria	Pound	0.020661	0.023810	1.243200
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025080	0.028902	1.509100
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000544	0.000627	0.032700

RP aims to be top geothermal producer by 2013

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Philippines has set its sights on unseating the United States as the world's top producer of geothermal energy in 10 years.

Eduarto Manalac, undersecretary of the Department of Energy, said the plan would require adding 1,200 megawatts of geothermal energy by 2013, giving the Philippines a total geothermal output of 3,132 MW.

The United States currently produces about 2,700 MW of geothermal energy, followed by the Philippines with 1,932 MW.

The plan to increase geothermal energy output is in line with the country's program to double the country's power generating capacity in 10 years.

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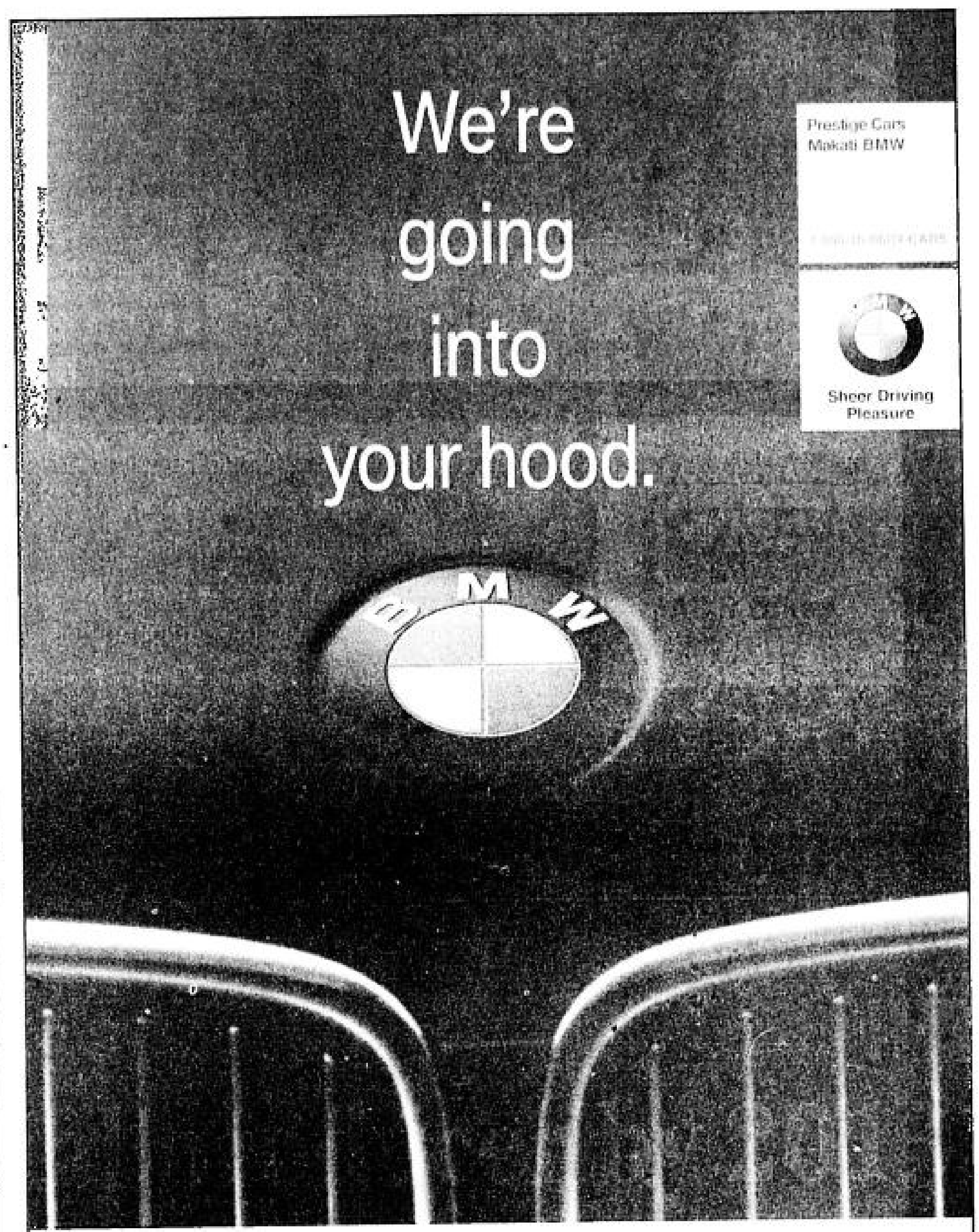

Prestige Cars Makati BMW heads to your neighborhood to give a free diagnostic test to all BMW cars on May 16, 17 and 18 and on May 23, 24 and 25, 2003 from 10 am to 6 pm at the Autohann BF Car Exchange, along Presidents Avenue, BF Homes Parañaque near the Tahanan Village entrance. Also you can check out our Certified Pre Owned BMW cars that will be available for test drive. Guaranteed to have passed the strictest BMW quality standards. Only from Prestige Cars Makati BMW. Everything

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G1 GLORIETTA 1
1 WALANG KAPALIT
TILL THERE WAS YOU / THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 X-MEN 2
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

G4 GLORIETTA 4
1 JOHNNY ENGLISH / THE MATRIX RELOADED
CONFESSIONS OF A .../ THE MATRIX RELOADED
THX GUARANTEED SEATS BRINGING DOWN ... 11 40 1 50 THE MATRIX RELOADED 4 40 7 30 10 20
4 X-MEN 2
25TH HOUR / THE MATRIX RELOADED
THE MATRIX RELOADED
WALANG KAPALIT

GB1 GREENBELT 1
ArtFilm
1 25TH HOUR 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
X-MEN 2 11:40, 2:30
THE MATRIX RELOADED 5:40, 8:25
Onstage
THE MATRIX RELOADED 3:30, 6:15, 9:00

GB3 GREENBELT 3
GUARANTEED SEATS THX BRINGING DOWN ... 12 40 2 50 THE MATRIX RELOADED 5 00 7 55 10 50
GUARANTEED SEATS THX THE MATRIX RELOADED 2 30 5 35 8 30 11 25
GUARANTEED SEATS 3 X-MEN 2 - 1 00 3 40 THE MATRIX RELOADED 6 45 9 40
GUARANTEED SEATS 4 THE MATRIX RELOADED 3 15 6 10 9 05 12 00
GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE HOURS 12 15 2 30 4 45 7 00 9 15 11 30

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MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 X-MEN-2
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 THE HOURS
8 TILL THERE WAS YOU
9 WALANG KAPALIT
10 WALANG KAPALIT

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290, 833.3274
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 KIKAY

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 KIKAY

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 BAYARAN
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 KIKAY
4 WALANG KAPALIT
5 THE MATRIX RELOADED
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED

star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 X-MEN-2
2 WALANG KAPALIT

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 8934225, 8922503
THE MATRIX RELOADED

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 JOHNNY ENGLISH

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515
1
2
3

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 BAYARAN
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 BAYARAN
5 X-MEN 2
6 WALANG KAPALIT
7 THE MATRIX RELOADED
8 THE HOURS
9 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928
1 KIKAY
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 X-MEN 2
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 THE HOURS
8 BAYARAN
9 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 KIKAY
3 X-MEN-2
4 WALANG KAPALIT
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 X-MEN-2
4 KIKAY
5 THE MATRIX RELOADED

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 WALANG KAPALIT

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 WALANG KAPALIT

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson KIKAY
Lords KIKAY
Jennet RESERVE

MAIRETHACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 KIKAY
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 KIKAY
3
4 WALANG KAPALIT
5 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1
2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 - 879.2029
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta

MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821 8242 8400
1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 THE MATRIX RELOADED
6 THE HOURS
7 KIKAY

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821 8242 8400
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0926
1 PUNLA
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUS
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ANGER MANAGEMENT
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 X-MEN-2
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 JOHNNY ENGLISH
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 WALANG KAPALIT

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 BAYARAN
2 KIKAY
3 WALANG KAPALIT
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 X-MEN-2
4 PUNLA
5 SOUL KEEPER

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALNG KAPALIT
3 PUNLA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 PUNLA

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 X-MEN-2
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 WALANG KAPALIT
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1
2

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 XEREX
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 X-MEN-2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-6001 TO 03
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887-0121
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

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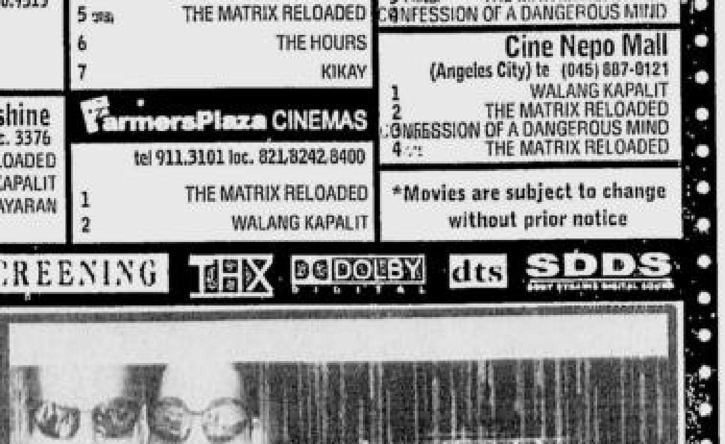
ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72



THE MATRIX RELOADED Starts at 2:30 PM TODAY at SM CINEMAS

SM CINEMA

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SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 THE MATRIX RELOADED
6 WALANG KAPALIT
7 KIKAY
8 THE HOURS

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 • 7161416
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 THE HOURS
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 KIKAY
5 THE MATRIX RELOADED
6 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
7 THE MATRIX RELOADED
8 TILL THERE WAS YOU
9 X-MEN 2
10 WALANG KAPALIT

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
2 BAYARAN
3 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 X-MEN 2
6 WALANG KAPALIT
7 THE MATRIX RELOADED
8 TILL THERE WAS YOU
9 WALANG KAPALIT
10 THE HOURS
11 KIKAY
12 THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 X-MEN 2
3 THE HOURS
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 KIKAY
8 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
9 WALANG KAPALIT
10 XEREX
11 TILL THERE WAS YOU
12 WALANG KAPALIT

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 X-MEN 2
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED
5 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
6 THE HOURS
7 KIKAY
8 WALANG KAPALIT
9 WALANG KAPALIT
10 THE MATRIX RELOADED
11 TILL THERE WAS YOU
12 XEREX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452
1 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 XEREX
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 WALANG KAPALIT
6 THE HOURS
7 X-MEN 2
8 THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088
1 X-MEN 2
2 THE HOURS
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 WALANG KAPALIT
5 KIKAY
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 WALANG KAPALIT
8 THE MATRIX RELOADED
9 TILL THERE WAS YOU
10 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

SM CITY CEBU
2313876
1 X-MEN 2
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 VIRGIN PEOPLE 3
4 JUNGLE BOOK 2
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
6 WALANG KAPALIT
7 WALANG KAPALIT
8 THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422
1 JUNGLE BOOK 2
2 CLOSED
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 WALANG KAPALIT
5 X-MEN 2
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED
7 CLOSED
8 RING 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 THE MATRIX RELOADED
3 X-MEN 2
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 WALANG KAPALIT
6 WALANG KAPALIT

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 WALANG KAPALIT
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 THE MATRIX RELOADED
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 WALANG KAPALIT
4 KIKAY

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 X-MEN 2
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 JUNGLE BOOK 2
6 THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM BICUTAN
7763055
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 WALANG KAPALIT
4 THE MATRIX RELOADED

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592884
1 THE MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 JUNGLE BOOK 2
4 X-MEN 2

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
Tel : 636 0781 - 85

BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE 12:10 MF/2:20 LMF/4:00 END
THE MATRIX RELOADED 4:10 FS/4:40 MF/7:30/9:55 LFS/10:20 LMF/12:45 END
X2: X-MEN UNITED 11:00 FS/11:10 MF/1:30 END
THE MATRIX RELOADED 5:20 MF/10:35 LFS/ 11:00 LMF/1:25 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
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CINEMAS

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Galleria 632-9115-16 633-7641 loc. 279
THX MATRIX RELOADED 12:30 MF 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 LMF, 11:50 END
2 MATRIX RELOADED
3 MATRIX RELOADED
4 MATRIX RELOADED
5 WALANG KAPALIT
6 X-MEN 2
7 TILL THERE WAS YOU
8 THE HOURS
9 BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR
10 BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema P75 ll level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS

Ermita 536-7809-12
1 MATRIX RELOADED
2 X-MEN 2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 THE HOURS
5 MATRIX RELOADED
6 WALANG KAPALIT
7 MATRIX RELOADED

Metro East - Marcos hway 682-8193 / 8280
1 X-MEN 2
2 THE HOURS
3 MATRIX RELOADED
4 MATRIX RELOADED
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
6 MATRIX RELOADED
7 KIKAY
8 WALANG KAPALIT

Novaliches 935-3229-30
1 MATRIX RELOADED
2 MATRIX RELOADED
3 X-MEN 2
4 THE HOURS
5 BEHIND THE GREEEN DOORS
6 KIKAY
7 TILL THERE WAS YOU
8 WALANG KAPALIT

Malabon Citisquare 288-0985 / 288-2575
1 KIKAY
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 MATRIX RELOADED
4 X-MEN 2

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp (045)875-1927 (045)961-5270
1 X-MEN2
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 JUNGLE BOOK 2
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 MATRIX RELOADED
6 MATRIX RELOADED

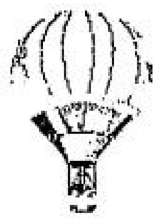
Imus 471-8188 / 875-3838
1 MATRIX RELOADED
2 X-MEN 2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 MATRIX RELOADED
5 WALANG KAPALIT
6 KIKAY

Sta. Rosa Laguna (049)837-0907
1 X-MEN 2
2 MATRIX RELOADED
3 WALANG KAPALIT
4 MATRIX RELOADED
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU

Bacolod 441-0453 / 0459
1 MATRIX RELOADED
2 WALANG KAPALIT
3 MATRIX RELOADED
4 X-MEN 2
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
6 JUNGLE BOOK 2

Iloilo 336-8077-78
1 MATRIX RELOADED
2 X-MEN 2
3 RING 2
4 MATRIX RELOADED
5 WALANG KAPALIT
6 JUNGLE BOOK 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.



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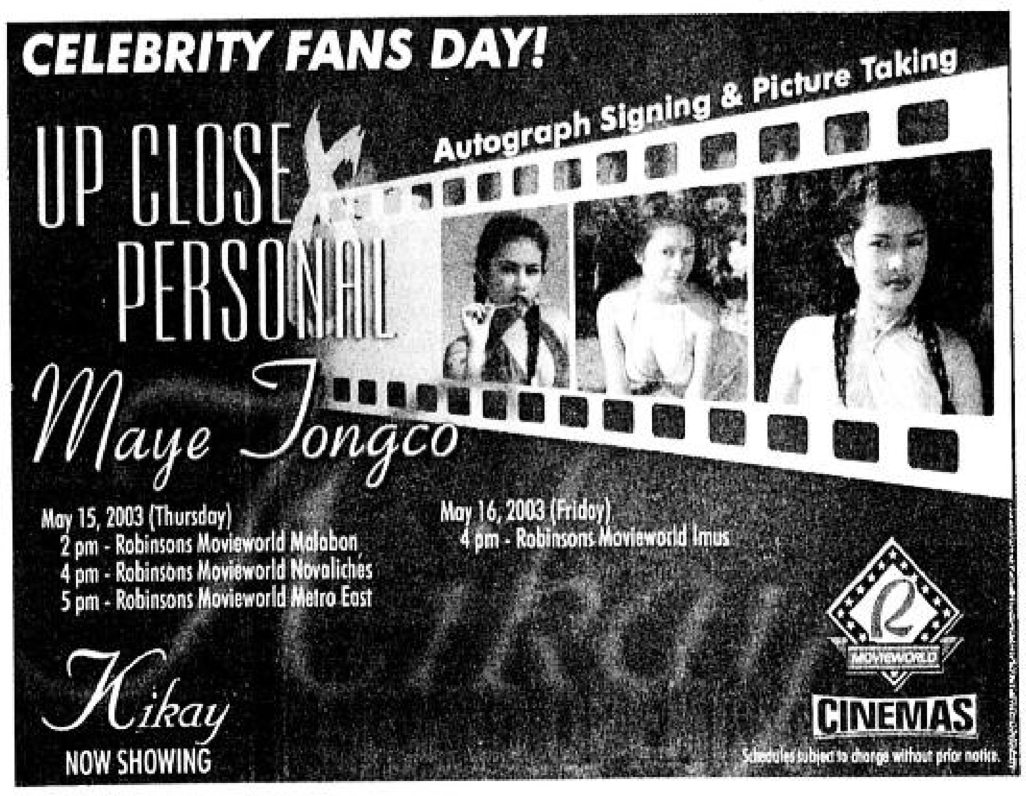

CELEBRITY FANS DAY!

May 15, 2003 (Thursday)
2 pm - Robinsons Movieworld Malabon
4 pm - Robinsons Movieworld Novaliches
5 pm - Robinsons Movieworld Metro East

May 16, 2003 (Friday)
4 pm - Robinsons Movieworld Imus

Kikay
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MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS
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MATRIX RELOADED
WWW.THEMATRIX.COM

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

MATRIX RELOADED

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GALLERIA - 632 915 to 16
ERMITA - 536 7809 to 13
NOVALICHES - 935 3229 to 31
METRO EAST - 682 8280 / 682 [illegible]
MALABON - 288 0985 / 288 2575
IMUS - (046) 471 8188 / (046) 875 3838
STARMILLS - (045) 961 5270
STA. ROSA - (049) 837 0907
ILOILO - (033) 336 8078
BACOLOD - (034) 441 0453

NOW SHOWING

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
Ali 2	WALANG KAPALIT
Ali 3	X-MEN 2
Ali 4	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 5	MATRIX RELOADED
Ali 6	THE HOURS
Ali 7	KIKAY

ARANETA COLISEUM

MAY 16	ALLAN K. CONCERT
MAY 17	NORA AUNOR CONCERT
MAY 18	PBA GAMES
MAY 19 & 21	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAY 31	PBA FANS DAY

ELEPHANT WORLD

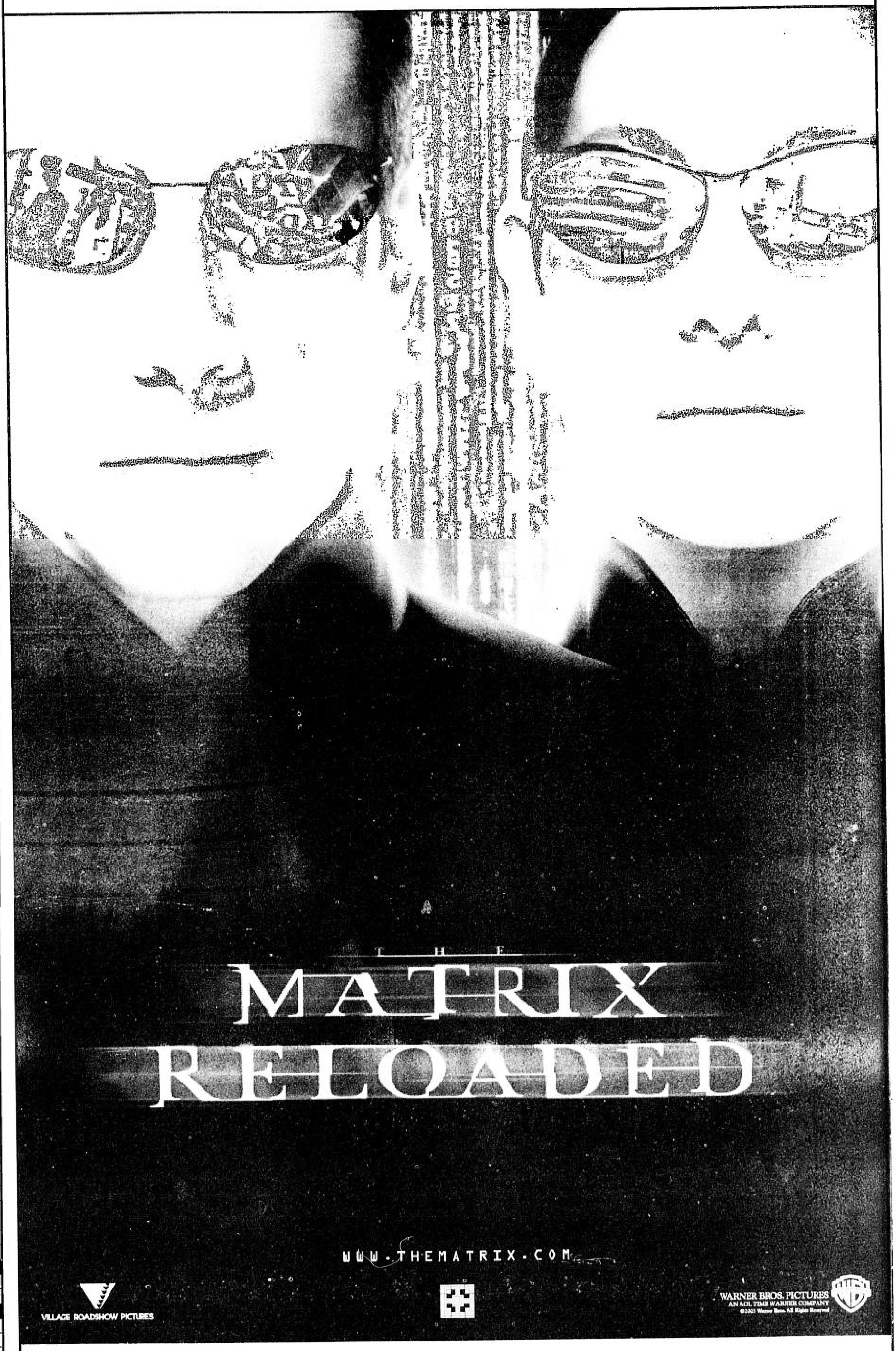
ELEPHANT SHOW
REOPENING SOON !

FUN RIDES
TAGADISCO • VIKING SHIP
START 4PM (DAILY)

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	KIKAY
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	PUNLA
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	WALANG KAPALIT
B	KIKAY
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	WALANG KAPALIT
CINEMA-2	KIKAY
CINEMA-3	XEREX
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-7	BAYARAN
CINEMA-8	PINOCCHIO
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
CINEMA-12	THE HOURS
CINEMA-14	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-15	WALANG KAPALIT
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	WALANG KAPALIT
CINEMA 2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA 3	X-MEN 2
CINEMA 4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP



VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES

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GRAND OPENING TODAY IN 160 THEATERS NATIONWIDE !!!

Fed officials see US growth

DENVER—Two top Federal Reserve officials agreed the US economy was poised to strengthen, but one expressed frustration that growth was well shy of what is needed to reach full employment.

Dallas Federal Reserve Bank President Robert McTeer told students at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., that he would like to see the economy growing at a pace "well north of four percent until full employment is restored."

In a separate appearance, Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank chief Thomas Hoenig told a group of bankers and business leaders in Denver he was "cautiously optimistic" on the outlook.

Hoenig said the economy, which advanced at a sluggish 1.6 percent annual rate in the first quarter, would likely be growing around a three percent pace by year's end, with a further pickup toward four percent in 2004.

Both officials, neither of whom has a vote this year on the Fed panel that sets interest rates, said the United States faced only a small risk of the type of deflation that has hounded Japanese policymakers for years.

That echoed comments on Monday from San Francisco Fed chief Robert Parry, who said deflation risks "are not great" if the economy picks up as expected.

The question of whether the United States might be at risk of deflation, in which the level of consumer prices actually drops, has received increased attention since the Fed last Tuesday said the risk of an unwanted sharp drop in inflation, although small, outweighed the risk of rising prices.

Deflation can hamstring an economy by increasing the burden of debt and sapping the ability of a central bank to spur growth through interest rate cuts.

"I think the possibility of an unanticipated large drop in inflation, or deflation if you prefer, is very remote," Hoenig said. *Reuters*

AFTER SAUDI BLASTS

Dollar firms, stocks stable

SINGAPORE—The dollar was firmer on Wednesday as currency markets digested the US treasury chief's warnings against intervention, while oil held onto its gains and Asian stocks were subdued after suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia.

The dollar edged up against the euro and yen after Treasury Secretary John Snow insisted the US strong dollar policy remained intact and repeated that government interventions in the market were a bad idea.

Crude oil prices held steady in Asian trading after soaring in New York following suicide bombings that killed at least 29 people in expatriate housing compounds in the Saudi capital.

Washington blamed the attacks on al-Qaida.

Asian stock markets were generally flat after a tech-led rally on Wall Street faltered on Tuesday.

But Japanese stocks closed higher, led by a 4.1 percent gain in Sony Corp. after the consumer electronics giant said it would launch a handheld gaming device.

The Nikkei average rose 0.67 percent to 8,244.91. The TOPIX index climbed 0.34 percent to 832.00, with investors wary of selling ahead of a cabinet meeting on stock-boosting measures scheduled for after the market's close.

"These steps may ease some selling, but will not induce buying," said Motoyoshi Uchida, strategist at Mizuho Investors Securities. "I don't see a sustained rally as long as nothing is done to boost the economy and fix fundamental problems."

South Korea shares closed 0.67 percent lower, rattled by a truckers strike that has hit the country's biggest port.

Samsung Electronics lost 2.06 percent.

Australian shares closed off 0.36 percent, despite a 2.1 percent gain for News Corp. after it posted a strong third quarter and upped its year earnings guidance. Taiwan stocks closed a touch higher, extending a two-week rally.

Hong Kong stocks were up a tad by midday, though Cathay Pacific Airways fell two percent after saying April passenger traffic fell by two-thirds due to the SARS outbreak.

Singapore shares were down one percent. *Reuters*

Lufthansa warns of loss

FRANKFURT—German airline Lufthansa warned it would make an operating loss this year as SARS and the weak economy pound demand for air travel, sending its shares lower on Wednesday.

Europe's third-largest passenger airline posted a first-quarter operating loss that was wider than analysts expected and said the extent of its 2003 loss would depend on the global economy, the situation in the Middle East, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

"Air transport worldwide is facing its greatest economic crisis ever. The situation has never been so serious," Chief Executive Juergen Weber said in a statement.

Deutsche Lufthansa AG, which in January dropped its goal of returning to one billion euros in operating profit this year, said it was still in a strong financial position and had reduced net debt by 11 percent.

The airline's shares fell 2.73 percent to 8.90 euros, the biggest loser on Germany's bluechip DAX, which fell 0.41 percent.

"It's a profit warning," said Morgan Stanley analyst Martin Borghetto. "That's a billion (euro) move within the first four months. That's enormous," he said, adding the weakness in Asia traffic had hurt the German carrier harder than peers like Air France.

Air France reported better-than-expected results after the market close on Tuesday, and its shares rose more than 3 percent on Wednesday.

Other analysts were concerned that the worst was not over.

"We still have yet to see the impact of SARS," said Commerzbank analyst Dominic Edridge, saying the negative effect of the virus only started to hurt at the end of March. *Reuters*

Mitsubishi posts profit rise

TOKYO—Mitsubishi Corp., Japan's biggest trading house, reported a slight 3.2- percent rise in annual profit on Wednesday as it booked losses on stock holdings but like other trading firms it said it expected a better year ahead.

Revenues of Mitsubishi and other trading houses—once symbols of Japan's economic might and known for handling everything from satellites to instant noodles—have been stagnant for years as a result of weakness in key markets.

Still, Mitsubishi, along with second-ranked Mitsui & Co. Ltd., is considered to be a winner in the battered sector, where companies are rushing to forge alliances with rivals and undertake sweeping restructuring to boost profitability.

Mitsubishi reported a consolidated net profit, reported under US accounting rules, of 62.27 billion yen ($533 million) for the year ended in March, in line with its reduced estimate of 62 billion yen announced last week.

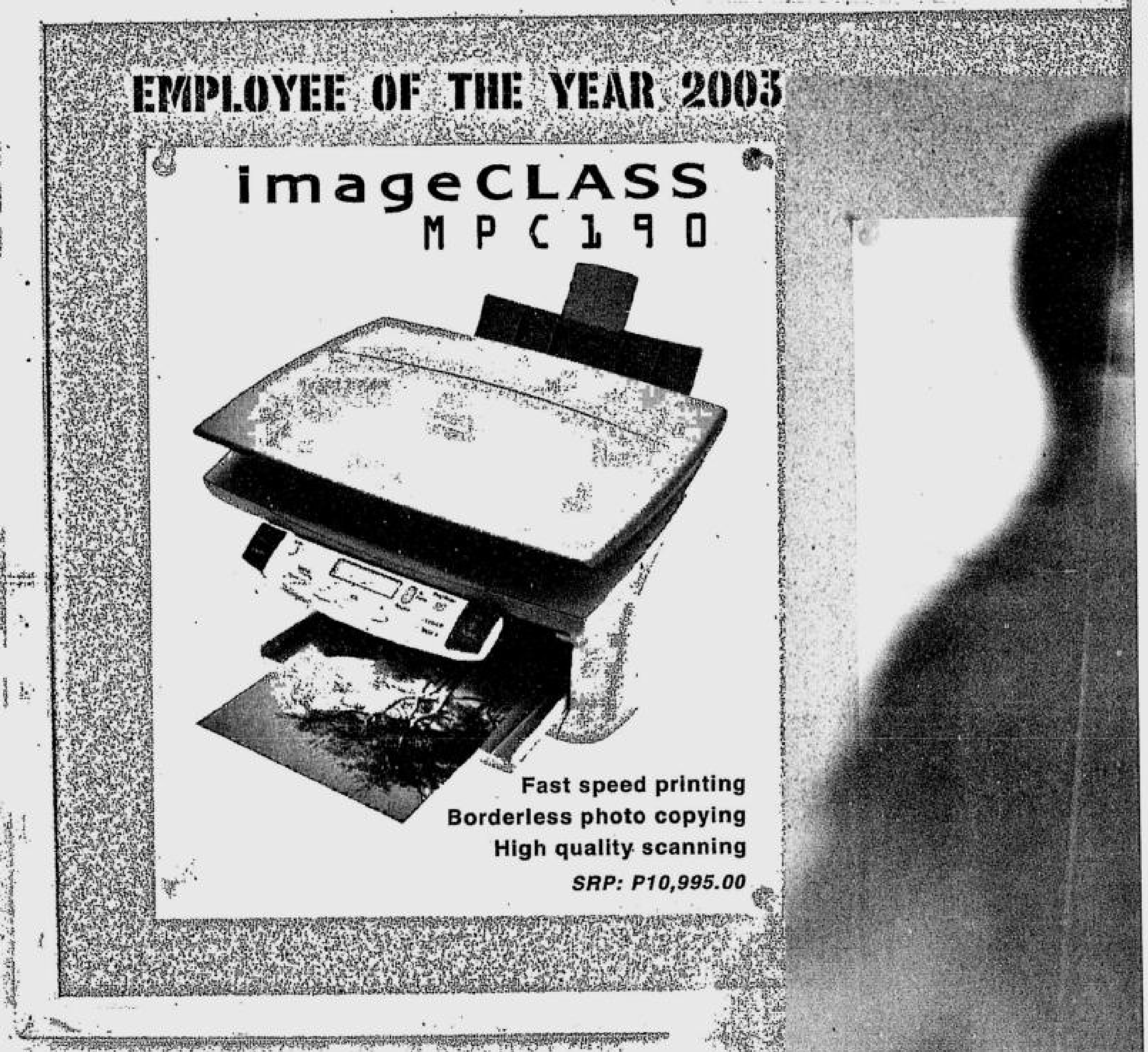
Consolidated revenue rose 0.7 percent to 13.33 trillion yen ($114 billion)—more than the gross domestic product of Ireland.

Mitsubishi's bottom line profit was hurt by 78 billion yen in securities-related-losses, including valuation losses on listed shares in affiliated companies such as Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group and Mitsubishi Motors Corp.

Even so, operating profit jumped nearly 50 percent to 100.64 billion yen in 2002/03, surpassing the 100 billion yen mark for the first time in a decade, powered by solid earnings from expanding earnings on metals and foods and a recovery in its overseas auto sales and financing businesses.

"We are seeing benefits from our strategy of focusing on areas such as energy and (natural) resources that are resilient to deflation or economic weakness," Koji Furukawa, the company's chief financial officer, told a news conference.

Mitsubishi said it expected operating profit to rise nearly 20 percent in 2003/04 to 120 billion yen. Group net profit was forecast to rise 60.5 percent to a record 100 billion yen this business year on revenue of 14.3 trillion yen. *Reuters*



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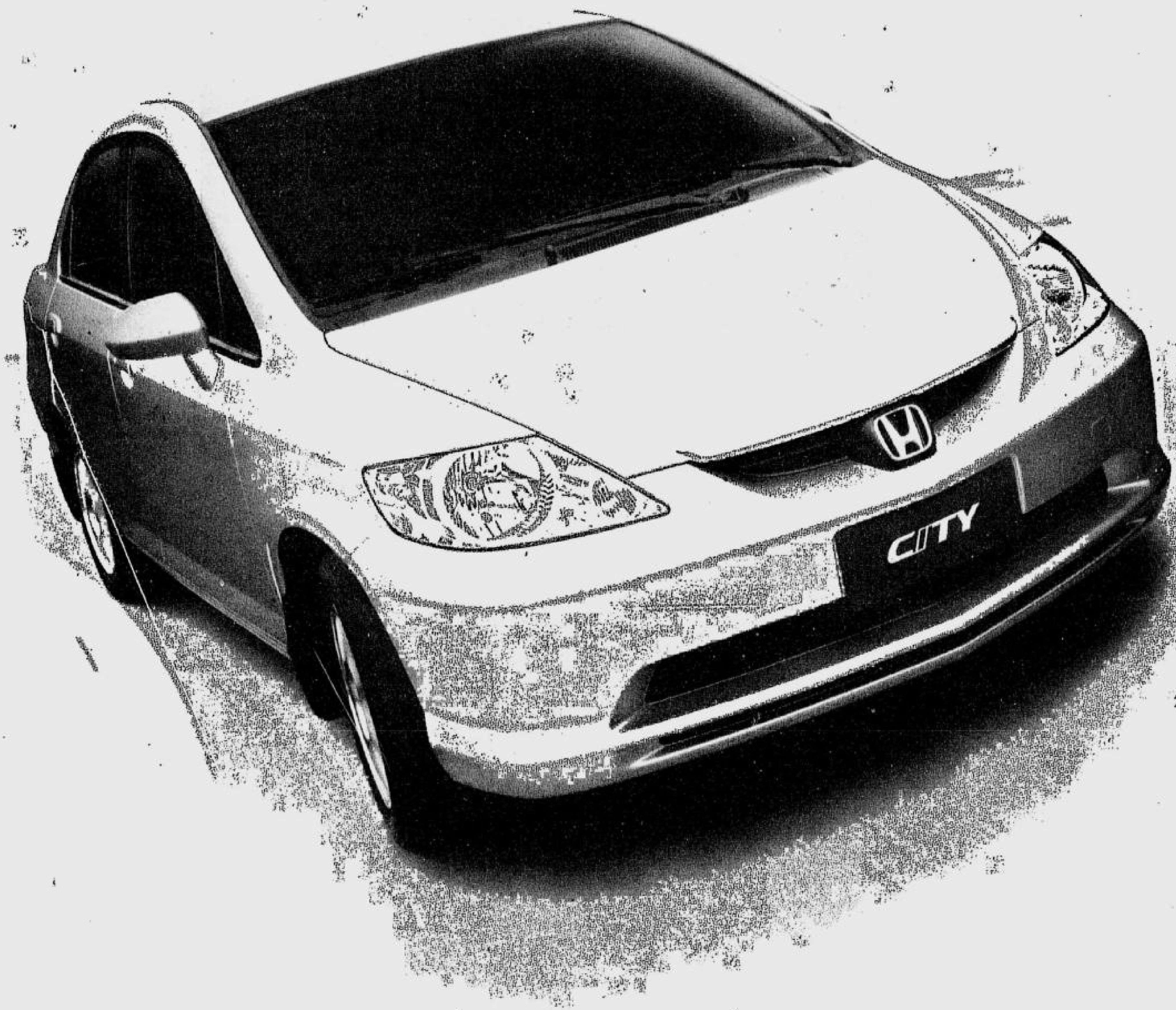

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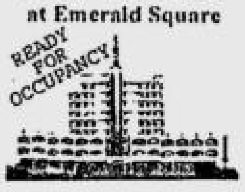

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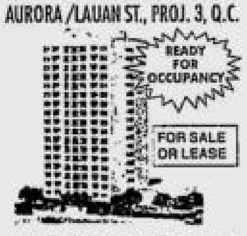

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ARMANDO BALUYOT has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs on May 13, 2003 and absolutely sold to ABRAHAM, MOISES and RUTH all surnamed DE CASTRO as per Doc. No. 186; Page No. 39, Book 1; Series of 2003, before Notary Public Marianito R. Atienza of Bacoor Cavite
PDI-May 15, 22 & 29, 2003

The public is notified that the Intestate Estate of Deceased Publio M. Hernandez has been extra-judicially settled by the heirs under Deed of Extra-Judicial Settlement dated May 2, 20003 identified in the Notarial Register of Atty. Roel Costuna as Doc. No. 265; Page No. 53; Book No. I; Series of 2003 (PDI-May 8, 15 & 22,2003)

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UNI-PRESIDENT (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION

NOTICE OF
SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Please be notified that there shall be a Special Stockholders' Meeting of UNI-PRESIDENT (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION to be held on 30 May 2003, Friday, regarding the dissolution of the corporation at 10:00 a.m. at its principal office at Unit-2004A, East Tower, PSE Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas, Pasig City, to discuss the following agenda:

I. Call to Order
II. Proof of Notice / Certification Of Quorum
III. Ratification of a Board Resolution resolving to Voluntarily Dissolve the Corporation
IV. Other Matters
V. Adjournment

(Sgd.) LORNA PATAJO-KAPUNAN
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--May 1, 8 & 15, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

VACANT POSITIONS

(In compliance with RA 7041)

1 ACCOUNTING CLERK II	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-AC2-34-1998 SG - 6 EDUCATION - Completion of two years studies in College EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Subprof. First Level Eligibility
1 PLANNING OFFICER I	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-PLO1-10-1998 SG - 11 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree relevant to the job EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility
1 UTILITY WORKER I	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-UTW1-313-1998 SG - 1 EDUCATION - Must be able to read and write EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - None required (MC 11, s.96-Cat. III)
1 HRMO II	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-HRMO2-10-1998 SG - 15 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree EXPERIENCE - 1 year of relevant experience TRAINING - 4 hours of relevant training ELIGIBILITY - CS prof. Second Level Eligibility
1 HRMO I	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-HRMO1-80-1998 SG - 11 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility
7 CLERK II	- Item nos. OSEC-DENRB-CK2-81-1998; CK2-177-1998; CK2-1-1998; CK2-318-1998; CK2-309-1998; CK2-35-1998; CK2-156-1998; SG - 4 EDUCATION - Completion of two years studies in college EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Subprof. First level Eligibility
1 SECRETARY II	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-SEC2-1-1998 SG - 9 EDUCATION - Completion of two years studies in college EXPERIENCE - 1 year of relevant experience TRAINING - 4 hours of relevant training ELIGIBILITY - CS Subprof. First Level Eligibility
2 HRM Aide	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-HRMA-1-1998; HRMA-57-1998; SG - 4 EDUCATION - Completion of two years studies in college EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Subprof. First Level Eligibility
1 PEO IV	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-PEO4-2-1998 SG - 22 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree relevant to the job EXPERIENCE - 3 years of relevant experience TRAINING - 16 hours of relevant training ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility
1 BUDGET OFFICER I	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-BUDO1-46-1998 SG - 11 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree relevant to the job EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility
1 ECONOMIST I	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-ECO1-1-1998 SG-11 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree relevant to the job EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility
1 HRM ASSISTANT	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-HRMAS-44-1998 SG - 8 EDUCATION - Completion of two years studies in college EXPERIENCE - 1 year of relevant experience TRAINING - 4 hours of relevant training ELIGIBILITY - CS Subprof. First Level Eligibility
1 EXECUTIVE ASST. IV	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-EXE4-9-1998 SG - 22 EDUCATION - Bachelor's degree EXPERIENCE - 3 years of experience TRAINING - 16 hours of training ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility
1 SECRETARY I	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-SEC1-48-1998 SG - 7 EDUCATION - Completion of two years studies in college EXPERIENCE - None required TRAINING - None required ELIGIBILITY - CS Subprof. First Level Eligibility
1 BUDGET OFFICER V	- Item no. OSEC-DENRB-BUDO5-1-1998 SG - 24 EDUCATION - Masteral degree EXPERIENCE - 4 years in position/s involving management and supervision TRAINING - 24 hours of training in management and supervision ELIGIBILITY - CS Prof. Second Level Eligibility

(PDI - May 15, 2003)

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BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of ZIMPLIZITY SOLUTIONS CORPORATION (proposed corporation) with office address at Regina Building, 100 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as New IT Export Service Firm in the field of Call Center with project site at same office address stated above has been officially accepted on May 13, 2003 and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 13th day of May 2003.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--May 15, 2003)

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"We walk by faith not by sight... confident and well-pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:7-8

MARIANO C. VILLAVIEJA

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of our Lord on the 12th of May, 2003 at the age of 72.

He is survived by his loving wife **Grace**; children **Ding & Ethel**, **Divine & Rommel**, **Joy**, **Lizzie & Rustum**, **Macy & Steve**; grandchildren **Denise**, **EJ**, **Titus & Thea**; brother **Artemio** and sister **Flordeliza**.

His remains lie in state at Arlington East The Garden Chapels, C. Raymundo Avenue, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Saturday, 17th of May, 2003
at the Evergreen Memorial Garden
(back of Arlington East).

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Helping in the Grief of Many People

INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
PATERNO D. TABANGAN	MAY 15	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	#680 San Vicente St., Bilibiran, Binangonan, Rizal

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

The Family of the late

ROSENDA GATMAITAN-LORICA

Retired Professor of Chemistry, U.P. Diliman

Sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, visited and kept vigil in our hour of sorrow, attended funeral rites and prayers and in many ways comforted us in our moment of grief.

Maraming SALAMAT PO.
May God Bless You All.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

FERMIN FAJARDO ADRIOSULA

(July 7, 1918 - May 10, 2003)

Peacefully joined our Lord
on May 10, 2003 at the age of 84
after receiving the last sacrament.

His memory will always be remembered by his sisters **Julita Adriosula Viloria** and **Tecla Adriosula Mariano**; wife (**Iluminada †**), **Maura**; children (**Romeo †**), **Dolly**, **Anching**, **Tito**, **Danny**, **Father Mike**, **Roman**, **Cora** and **Lany**.

His mortal remains lie in state at his residence in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija and will be transferred to the Parish Church of San Bartolome Apostol, San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija on May 16, 2003.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 17, 2003 at the Municipal Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Holy Mass to be presided by His Excellency, Most Rev. Sofio G. Balce, DD., Bishop of Cabanatuan.

We design OBITUARIES for free.

CLASSIFIEDS

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(Accre. # 68572)

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6. **ARCHITECTURAL DETAILER**
7. **ARCHITECTURAL ACAD DRAFTSMAN**
8. **STRUCTURAL ACAD DRAFTSMAN**
9. **MECHANICAL HVAC ACAD DRAFTSMAN**
10. **ELECTRICAL ACAD DRAFTSMAN**
11. **SANITARY ACAD DRAFTSMAN**

- All Applicants above must possess BS Degree in their respective field. Minimum of 10 years experience as designer in design office for Healthcare, Hotel, Office, Residential, Sports Facilities & High Rise Buildings as designers.

Interested applicants may report for a personal preliminary interview with 2 sets of the following : Certificate of Employment, Transcript of Records, Valid passport and 2 pcs. 2x2 ID picture with white background.

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Bukidnon
City of Malaybalay
* * *
OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date May 15, 2003
World Bank Loan No. 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the Construction of 18-Buildings, 99 Classrooms School Buildings. Bidding is open to all bidders from Eligible source as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The City of Malaybalay, Bukidnon invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the Construction of 18-Buildings, 99-Classrooms School Buildings; consisting:

LIST OF PACKAGES

PACKAGE		CLASSIFICATION	
"A"	CONSTRUCTION OF	4-BUILDINGS, 3-UNITS	25-CLASSROOMS 10-COMFORT ROOMS
"B"	CONSTRUCTION OF	1-TWO STOREY BUILDING, 10-CLASSROOMS BUILT-IN COMFORT ROOMS	
"C"	CONSTRUCTION OF	1-TWO STOREY BUILDING, 10-CLASSROOMS BUILT-IN COMFORT ROOMS	
"D"	CONSTRUCTION OF	1-TWO STOREY BUILDING, 10-CLASSROOMS BUILD-IN COMFORT ROOMS	
"E"	CONSTRUCTION OF	4-BUILDINGS, 2-UNITS,	18-CLASSROOMS WITH 4-COMFORT ROOMS
"F"	CONSTRUCTION OF	4-BUILDINGS, 4-UNITS	13-CLASSROOMS WITH 10-COMFORT ROOMS
"G"	CONSTRUCTION OF	3-BUILDINGS, 3-UNITS	13-CLASSROOMS WITH 6-COMFORT ROOMS

3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting May 9, 2003 to June 26, 2003 at BAC Office, City, City Hall, Malaybalay City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 3,000.00 or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of Ninety (90) days after bid opening and must be accompanied by security of:

PACKAGE	CLASSIFICATION	SECURITY BOND
"A"	CONSTRUCTION OF 4-BUILDINGS, 25 CLASSROOMS	PHP 220,000.00
"B"	CONSTRUCTION OF 1-TWO STOREY BUILDING, 10 -CLASSROOMS	PHP 150,000.00
"C"	CONSTRUCTION OF 1-TWO STOREY BUILDING, 10 CLASSROOMS	PHP 150,000.00
"D"	CONSTRUCTION OF 1-TWO STOREY BUILDING, 10 CLASSROOMS	PHP 150,000.00
"E"	CONSTRUCTION OF 4-BUILDINGS, 18-CLASSROOMS	PHP 160,000.00
"F"	CONSTRUCTION OF 4-BUILDINGS, 13-CLASSROOMS	PHP 130,000.00
"G"	CONSTRUCTION OF 3-BUILDINGS, 13-CLASSROOMS	PHP 130,000.00

in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency, and shall be delivered to the City Treasurers Office, City Hall, Malaybalay City on or before 9:00 a.m. of June 26, 2003 at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.

5. A pre-bid conference will be held at 9:00 a.m. of June 10, 2003 at the City Engineer's Office, Conference room, Casisang, Malaybalay City.
6. The City of Malaybalay, Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to the award of Contract.

(Sgd.) **FLORENCIO T. FLORES, JR.**
City Mayor / BAC Chairman

(PDI – May 15, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL OCURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
CITY OF PARAÑAQUE
BRANCH 258

IN THE MATTER OF PETITION FOR INVOLUNTARY INSOLVENCY OF MR. JESUS V. TIBAYAN, the absolute and actual owner of the following satellite companies: TIBAYAN GROUP INVESTMENT COMPANY, INC., ETC.
Debtor,
SP. PROC. CASE NO. 03-035

ROBERTO C. LAZAM,
MILAGROS R. LOMOLIO,
ROBERTO LUIS ROQUE,
HERMINIA PALACIOS,
in their behalf and on behalf of the members of the Aksyon Laban sa Investment Scam (ALISCAM), Inc.,
Petitioners.

X -x

AMENDED ORDER

Finding the Amended verified petition for involuntary insolvency against Mr. JESUS V. TIBAYAN, the alleged absolute and actual owner of the following satellite companies:

TIBAYAN GROUP INVESTMENT COMPANY, INC.
TG ASSET MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
MATCOR HOLDINGS COMPANY, LTD.
JETCOR EQUITY COMPANY, LTD.
STA. ROSA MANAGEMENT AND TRADING CORPORATION
WESTAR ROYALTY MANAGEMENT AND TRADING CORPORATION
STARBOARD MANAGEMENT AND TRADING CORPORATION
UNITED ALPA MANAGEMENT AND TRADING CORPORATION
ATHON MANAGEMENT AND TRADING CORPORATION
DIAMOND STAR MANAGEMENT AND TRADING CORPORATION
TIBAYAN MANAGEMENT GROUP INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS CO. LTD.

to be sufficient in form and substance for having complied with the following requirements of the Insolvency Law, to wit:

1. The debts of the petitioning creditors exceed the minimum amount of credits required under the Insolvency Law of at least One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00);
2. The petition contains the Verification signed by at least three (3) of the creditors;
3. The petition contains a statement regarding the petitioning creditors' willingness to post a bond, conditioned in that if the petition be dismissed, or if the debtor be not declared an insolvent, the petitioners will pay to the debtor all costs, expenses, and damages occasioned by the proceedings, plus reasonable attorney's fees.

let the petition be set for hearing on April 28, 2003 at 8:30 in the morning.

The petitioning creditors are hereby directed to post a bond in the total amount of TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P200,000.00) from at least two (2) insurance companies within two (2) days from receipt of this Order, conditioned that if the petition in insolvency be dismissed by the court or withdrawn by the petitioners, the petitioners will pay to the respondent debtor all costs, expenses and damages occasioned by the proceedings in insolvency, together with a reasonable counsel's fee to be fixed by the court.

The debtor is hereby directed to file his answer to the petition on or before the hearing and show cause why he should not be adjudged an insolvent pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Insolvency Law, as amended.

Meanwhile, the payment of any debts due to petitioners and the delivery to the petitioners, or any person for the petitioners, of any property belonging to the debtor, and the transfer of any property by the debtor, are hereby forbidden effective immediately.

Let a copy of this Order be served on the debtor at least five (5) days before the initial hearing on the petition by the Process Server of this Court at the expense of the petitioners at:

1. Global Progress Management and Trading Corporation
   3rd Floor, J & M Mendoza Building
   Doña Soledad Avenue, Better Living Subdivision
   Parañaque City
2. Athon Management and Trading Corporation
   U-10, Olivares Plaza, NAIA Avenue, Sucat, Parañaque City

which are under the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.

SO ORDERED.

City of Parañaque, March 31, 2003.

(Sgd.) **RAUL E. DE LEON**
Judge

(PDI-May 15, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development - Ilocos
MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER
"PHIC Accredited Health Care Provider"
Batac, Ilocos Norte
Trunk line 077-792-3144; Fax line 077-792-3133
E-mail address: mmmh@laoag.net

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY/ELIGIBILITY SCREENING & TO BID

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center, Batac, Ilocos Norte, thru the Bids & Awards Committee is inviting bids from accredited suppliers, manufacturers and/or exclusive distributors to bid for the supply and delivery of the following:

Hospital Medical Equipment
Drugs & Medicines Requirements
Medical/Surgical Supplies, Laboratory, X'ray & Dental Supplies

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Issuance of Eligibility Documents	-	May 08 - 16, 2003
2. Submission of duly accomplished eligibility documents	-	May 26, 2003
3. Posting of eligible suppliers	-	May 28, 2003
4. Issuance of Bid Documents	-	May 28 - June 06, 2003
5. Pre-bid conference	-	June 11, 2003 10:00 AM sharp MMMH & MC Training Center
6. Submission & opening of sealed bids for - Medical Equipment	-	June 25, 2003 9:30 AM sharp (same venue)
- Drugs & Medicines	-	June 26, 2003 9:30 AM sharp
- Medical/Surgical Supplies, Laboratory, X'ray and Dental Supplies	-	June 27, 2003 9:30 AM sharp

The complete set of bid documents may be purchased by the interested eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of EIGHT HUNDRED PESOS (Php 800.00) only. Bid documents may be secured at the Property & Supply Section.

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without offering any reason or waive any formality therein and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposls as evaluated by the Bids & Awards Committee, is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **REYNALDO B. NARAVAL, M.D.**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--May 10 & 15, 2003)

AUCTION

CONTRACTORS PLANT; FORKLIFTS; MACHINE TOOLS & EQUIPMENT; COMPRESSORS; GENERATORS, ETC

IN OVER 300 LOTS INCLUDING: -

CONTRACTORS PLANT - SUMITOMO S160FA Rubberized Shoe Backhoe Excavator; NAGAOKA Roller Compactor; Backhoe Bucket
FORKLIFTS - TOYOTA 1.5 Tons, MITSUBISHI 1.4 Tons Forklift Trucks
MACHINE TOOLS & EQUIPMENT - TOKAI 150 Tons Hydraulic Double Action Press; SHINABAWA 20 Tons Pneumatic Power Press; MITSUBISHI Manual Press Brake (6ft); Metal Shearing Machine (4ft); DENGENSHA 35KVA Spot Welders; AMADA VERNET Multiple Bar Cutter; Twin Milling Machine; DO ALL Metal Band Saw; MIYAMOTO Internal Grinder; OGURA G9-66 6" Pipe Threader; Lapping Machine, etc.
COMPRESSORS - DENYO 180/32 CFM Diesel; AIRMAN 25 CFM Rotary, etc.
GENERATORS - YANMAR 4 KVA 110V, HONDA 4 KVA 110V
MISCELLANEOUS - STAL 60 Ton 165 HP Refrigeration Unit; Concrete Mixer; Heavy Duty Pressure Washer; MITSUBISHI Mini Cab; Arc Welding; Mig Welder; 40 Hp Submersible Pumps; Electric Motor; Blower; Air Compressor; Rotary Cable; Planer; Jointer; 6" Bench Vise; Grinder; Chain Block; Hoist; Hand Tractor; Stainless Steel Tank; PANEX-E Dental X-Ray; SANKO Hardness Testers; Fire Extinguishers; Oxygen Tanks; Pipe Threader; Mechanical Bar Cutter, etc.

AT: GREAT LAKES COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE
#56 SCOUT MADRINAN, QUEZON CITY
AUCTION DATE: TUESDAY 20TH MAY 2003 10:30AM SHARP
VIEWING DATE: MONDAY 19TH MAY 2003
9:00AM - 5:00PM AND MORNING OF SALE DAY
REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT: PHP20,000 (UPON REGISTRATION)

HENRY BUTCHER

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILS. INC.
102 Ground Floor, Jolliland Bldg., 670 EDSA, Pasay City
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E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com
www.henrybutcher.com

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT

Pilar St., Zamboanga City
Telephone No. 991-1556, 991-1557

INVITATION TO BID

(Re-Bid)

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT (ZCWD) is inviting interested and licensed suppliers of uPVC Pipes, PE Pipes, Brass Adaptors, Corp. cocks, and Angle Meter Valves to submit bids for the following;

PR/JO NO.	DESCRIPTION
6566	uPVC Pipes, C150/S8, with rubber rings; Flexible Couplings; P.E. Tubings, SDR #11; Brass Adaptors; Corporation Cocks; Angle Meter Valves.

Interested suppliers may obtain *Bid Forms and Detailed Specifications* at the Records Section, 2F, ZCWD Bldg., Pilar St., Zamboanga City after payment of a minimal non-refundable fee of P500.00.

Submission of BIDS: **May 23, 2003**
10:00 a.m., 2/F ZCWD Main Office Bldg.
Pilar St., Zamboanga City

The ZCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive minor informalities in the bids received, and to award the contract to the supplier whose bid, as evaluated by the PBAC, is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **ARNULFO A. ALFONSO**
PBAC Chairman

(PDI – May 15, 2003)

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

PBCom income reaches P246.8 million in 2002

THE PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications (PBCom) registered an audited net income of P246.8 million for 2002, topping the previous year's P238.1 million. PBCom's income comes on top of P326.3 million in provisions for probable losses the bank set aside to further strengthen its balance sheet.

The Bank's net revenues increased by 17 percent to P1.92 billion primarily as a result of higher trading gains, sustained recoveries from the sale of assets and judicious funding cost management efforts.

Trading gains increased almost four times to P1.23 billion from just P314.5 million in the previous year mainly as a result of efforts to take advantage of underlying trading opportunities in a declining interest rate environment. The bank also benefited from the new electronic dealing system that was installed to address both front and back office operational requirements of treasury.

Meanwhile, spread management efforts have been largely successful in lowering interest expenses by 33 percent to P1.81 billion thereby reducing carrying costs to non-earning assets.

Measures to reduce overhead costs and improve operational efficiency initiated early in 2002 also yielded significant cost savings for the bank. Despite the significant investments made on automation and renovation of branches, and the cost of integrating Consumer Savings Bank (CSB), the increase in operating expenses was limited to only 10.7 percent. The bank, likewise, gained from the beneficial effects of a 12 percent reduction in headcount in December 2001 as part of an overall organizational streamlining.

Substantial efforts have been devoted to implementing a stricter approach to loan classification and identifying potential problem accounts even before these could materialize. This enabled PBCom to successfully keep a lid on its non-performing loans which management is confident, to have reached its peak in 2002.

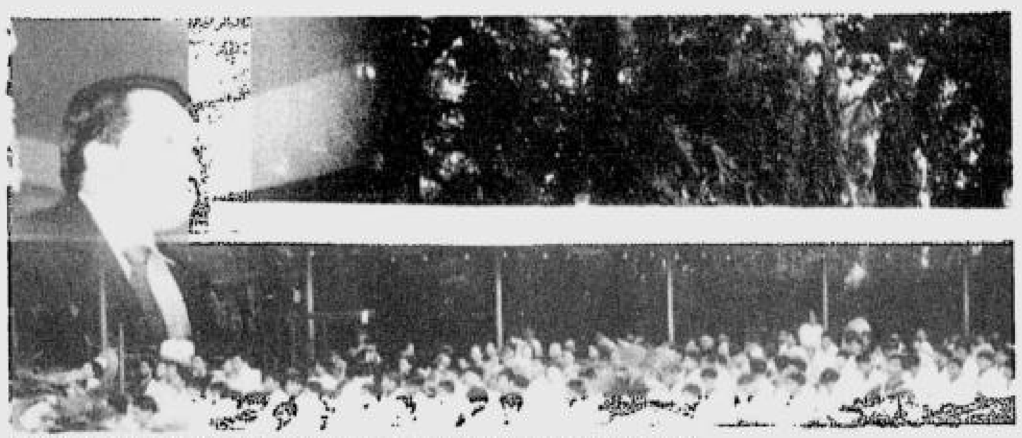
More significantly, this allowed the bank to focus on growing its earning asset base particularly the investment and trading securities portfolio which expanded by 77 percent or P3.8 billion to P8.74 billion.

To fund this expansion, the bank capitalized on its existing branch network capabilities and sustained the renovation of key branches. The bank, likewise, relocated low-performing branches in existing and emerging trade centers in Metro Manila. Total deposits, as a result, increased by 11 percent or P3.4 billion to P33.8 billion, a growth that compares favorably with the 4.6 percent average for the whole commercial banking sector.

The increased profitability resulted in a capital to risk asset ration well above the 10 percent regulatory requirement at 15.16 percent. With a total capital of P6.56 billion by end-2002, the bank emerged as the largest capitalized private regular commercial bank in the country.

NU SKIN FFG DONATION

In line with Nu Skin Enterprises' 'Force for Good' (FFG) campaign, its affiliate Nu Skin Philippines Inc. (NSP) recently turned over its cash donations to the Mabuhay Deseret Foundation (MDF) during NSP's 5th Anniversary Grand Convention held at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati City. MDF is a non-profit organization that provides medical assistance to indigent children born with harelip / cleft palate, club feet and crossed eyes. Shown are (from left) Saydi and Jeff Shumway of MDF holding the check donated by NSP, together with NSP independent distributors Ting and Raymond Yupangco who also gave a donation to the foundation. The couple is the brainchild behind the Force 'Fore' Good Golf Tournament, an annual fund-raising activity for the benefit of MDF. Also shown are Mannix Lopez, NSP's director of operations, and Darin Kirkham, director of operations for south Asia and the Pacific. Nu Skin Enterprises' FFG campaign is a global community project that aims to improve the lives of communities where Nu Skin exists.



SAN BEDA COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Dr. Ramon Ricardo A. Roque, Ceso I, deputy secretary general of the House of Representatives was recently invited as speaker during the 101st Commencement Exercises of the San Beda College Grade School Department. In his commencement address, Roque underscored the importance of San Beda College's Christian formation program and the Benedictine values of prayer, work and peace in every Bedan's quest for success and excellence. Roque is one of the most distinguished alumni of San Beda College and currently occupies a seat in the college's board of trustees.

MOBIL 1 IS ULTRA BYKES' TOP CHOICE

Executives of ExxonMobil Petroleum and Chemical Holdings, Inc. (EMPCHI) and Ultra Bykes Network recently attended signing ceremonies to formalize the selection of Mobil 1 Motorcycle Oils as the latter's lubricant of choice. Ultra Bykes Network, a division of Ultra Car Detailing, Inc., is the official distributor of Aprilia and Moto Guzzi Motorycles in the Philippines. Imported directly from Italy, each new motorcycle will be filled with Mobil 1 Racing 4T or Racing 2T, both fully synthetic lubricants especially formulated for motorcycle use. Ultra Bykes' Showroom and Service Center are located at the Ground Floor, La Fuerza Building, Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City. Mobil 1 is a trademark of ExxonMobil or one of its subsidiaries.

MARY'S ROAD SUMMER FROLICS

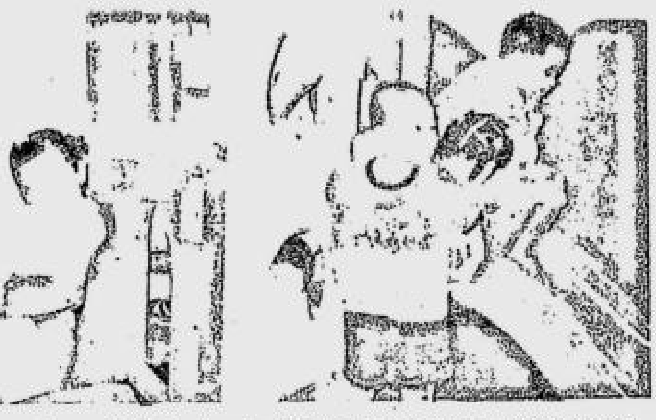


Photo shows preschoolers of Mary's Road Center for Development and Learning (MRCDL), a new learning center at the 2nd level of the Harrison Plaza Mall, in Adriatico St. Manila, as they indulge in 'free play', before the start of their formal classes. MRCDL encourages such an activity to allow the kids to relax, interact, and be able to relate to each other, during this summer pre-school which will last up to May 28. The month-long experience of fun and learning includes hands-on activities and a field trip . Enrollees for regular preschoolers are now being accepted. Call Mary's Road at 536-8552.

RLC AWARDS CONTRACTS TO IHG

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) announced that it has been awarded two new management contracts by Robinsons Land Corporation (RLC). Shown during the recent management agreement signing ceremony at the JG Summit Holdings, Inc. headquarters at the Robinson's Equitable Tower were; Lance Gokongwei (left), president and chief operating officer, Robinsons Land Corporation, and Patrick Imbardelli, managing director, Intercontinental Hotels Group (Asia Pacific).

NOVA'S 1ST INT'L FRISBEE TOURNEY A SUCCESS

International Ultimate teams from Europe, North America, and Asia recently competed with local teams from Boracay and Manila in the 1st International Ultimate Beach Tournament held recently in Boracay. This first-of-its kind international tourney in this side of Asia served as the kick-off event of the Jack n' Jill Nova Ultimate Frisbee Series. In photo are the winners of the tournament (from left): Wendell Simbulan of Young Askalz-Phil. Team, outstanding player; Annika Walters of Hongkong All-Star team, MVP; Jason Lopez of Young Askalz-Phil. Team, MVP; Boboy Pamaran of the Boracay Dragons, outstanding player.

FPPF EXHIBIT ADMIRED

Amadeo, Cavite Mayor Alberto 'OJ' Ambagan shows to Cavite Governor Ayong S. Maliksi one of the photos taken during the Pahimis (Coffee) Festival exhibited at the lobby of the provincial capitol of Cavite. The photos at the exhibit were taken by the different camera clubs affiliated with the Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation.

*Product*FILES

Sterling notebooks

BACK to school means back to Sterling. Another year of learning fun with your Sterling and Avanti notebooks. And to make the school opening much more exciting, Sterling and Avanti notebooks are giving away hundreds of fantastic prizes with the 'Sterling and Avanti Drive Your Way to School' raffle promo.

Two lucky grand prize winners, one for the customer and one for the "suki" store, will be driving their kids to school aboard a brand new Isuzu Hi-Lander Crosswind. Other exciting prizes are at stake.

For only P30,000-worth of single transaction purchase of Sterling and/or Avanti notebooks, binders, refills, you can already join the raffle. Simply fill out the Promo Raffle Coupon with required information and signature then drop the entry in designated drop boxes or mail the raffle stub to: "Sterling and Avanti Drive Your Way to School" c/o Sterling Paper Products Ent. Inc., 111 Lapu-lapu St., Kalookan City 1400.

Hurry don't miss the chance to win big prizes. Promo period is up to July 31. Sterling and Avanti notebooks are available at all leading bookstores, department stores and stationery stores nationwide.

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF JUNK/ SCRAP, SERVICEABLE/UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS
DATE OF BIDDING: MAY 29, 2003

The National Power Corporation will conduct a public bidding for the following items:

	ITEMS DESCRIPTION and LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
1.	One (1) lot Unserviceable/Busted Fluorescent Tubes, Bulbs, Mercury & other type Lamps, various Junk and Unserviceable items, such as Automotive spare parts, etc. located at Bldg. 2, Podium and Machine Room, Roof deck, Bldg. 2, NPC-Diliman, Q.C.	P 4,537.00/lot
2.	One (1) lot Used and Serviceable Fluorescent Tubes and Ballasts, located at Bldg. 2 basement, NPC, Diliman, Q.C.	P 70,000.00/lot
3.	One (1) lot Used and Unserviceable Printing Machine, consisting of Plate-maker, Electrostatic, model PM-60, Brand ELEFAX, s/n. 231763 and Off-Set machine, 1650 CD Basic Offset w/ chain delivery, Brand MULTI, Located at NPC OBC, Diliman, Quezon City.	P 64,000.00/lot
4.	One (1) lot Scrap and Junk items, consisting of 7 pcs. Perkins Engine blocks, Air-cons, Computers, auto spare parts, Diesel engine parts, I-Beams, channels, steel parts, etc. approx. 25 tons. This Lot is on a Clean-Up Basis. Located at SPUG, Minuyan, SJDM, Bulacan	P 75,000.00/lot
5.	One (1) lot Used and Unserviceable Steel Tower Parts, approx. 30 tons, consisting of deformed angular bars and steel plates of various lenghts/sizes, located at NPC Kalayaan stockyard, Lumban, Laguna	P121,500.00/lot

Sealed bids in the prescribed form shall be received until 3:00 p.m. of May 29, 2003 at the Materials Management Department Office, Ground Floor, Bldg. I, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City and shall then and there be opened and publicly read. For bid forms at P50.00 per set, additional information and request for inspection, please see Mr. S.V. LOMUNTAD, Jr. at the above address or call telephone no. 922-8431 or 9245-384. Deadline for the issuance of bid forms is 4:30 p.m. on May 28, 2003. All bids must be submitted with the following:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO FIVE PERCENT (5%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN OF THE BIDDER (2002) OR FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY (ORIGINAL OR BIR CERTIFIED COPY).

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality found therein and to accept/reject such proposal as may be advantageous to its interest.

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) F. B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI - May 14, 15 & 16, 2003)

Bits & Clips

Foodparks by Raintree bids summer with a blast

IF YOU'RE looking for the best food matched with endless body pumping entertainment, Food Odyssey at the 11th floor of LKG Tower, Ayala Avenue, brings you Milkwear's ultimate summer fashion show, back to back with N2 Deep's exhilarating music on May 16. To keep your adrenaline rush hyped up, the dancing tunes of Dash take center stage on May 30. And if you want to calm your senses and rejuvenate your mind with soulful music, you could also visit Food Park at the Enterprise Center, and Food and Art Galerie at GT Tower, every Wednesday and Friday nights this May. The fun starts at 6:30 p.m. This event is brought to you by Foodparks by Raintree, Milkwear, and media partners - Joey 92.3, Manila Bulletin, Philippine Daily Inquirer, in cooperation with Philonline, Gilbey's Island Punch, and Body and Soul, Nature's Gift from Australia. For inquiries, call 752-5681.

Speed matching for singles

MATCH.ph, a website catering to singles who want to meet other busy singles like them, will make the whole month of May special. "Speed matching" will be held every Tuesday of May, 8 p.m. at Café Lupe, Edsa corner Guadalupe, Makati. "Speed Matching" is a unique form of dating popular in western countries. Each "date" lasts only eight minutes so one person can meet up to eight persons all in one evening. There are 8 men and 8 women, each paired up and seated on separate tables. After the eight minutes of getting to know that 'date', everyone switches tables until every participant has met the others. At the end of the event, each participant will score who among his/her dates interest him/her the most. And if there is a match, contact numbers are exchanged. It's that fun and easy. Any singles 18 years old and above can join. For registration and other details, log on to www.match.ph.

Hog raising confab slated in Baguio

THE NATIONAL Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NFHFI), under the leadership of Gabriel Uy, will hold its 12th National Hog Farmers Convention on May 15 to 17, 2003, at the CAP Convention Center, Camp John Hay Manor in Baguio City. The banner theme will be 'Pro-Hog: Proficient Hog Farming - Profitable Hog Farming.' Keynote speakers during the event will be Department of Agriculture Secretary Luisito P. Lorenzo Jr., and Baguio Mayor Bernanrdo M. Vergara Jr. Several experts and lecturers will shed light on current issues affecting swine health and reproduction. The conference is in cooperation with Boehringer-Ingelheim Phils., Fil-Am Foods, Novartis Animal Health, Pfizer Animal Health, Robichem Laboratories, San Miguel B-Meg, Schering-Plough and Vitarich. For registration and more information, please contact the NFHFI Secretariat at 924-2259 and 924-2317. You may also emailo at nfhfsect@yahoo.com.

La Salle hosts post 911 confab

THE INTERNATIONAL Studies Department of De La Salle University (DLSU) - Manila, in cooperation with Public Cultural Affairs Office of the US Embassy, will hold a two-day international conference titled "Issues, Challenges and Trends in Post 911 Global Society: Locating the US in the Firestorm of Globalization" on May 16 to 17, at the Seminar Room 4th floor of DLSU-Don Enrique Yuchengco Hall, Taft Avenue, Manila. Culminating the 4th American Studies Summer Institute activity, the conference will discuss and examine the dynamics and trends of globalization as a social process, and the national / societal responses to this process in the light of tragic events on Sept. 11. For inquiries, please contact Sheng Nava at 524-4611 local 545 or email dlsuisd@yahoo.com.

MOTORING

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Revolutionary yet timely ideas in new Honda City

By Charles E. Buban

THE ALL-NEW Honda City carries an appealing design that promises to stand out among the crowd.

WELL it has been a while since the local motoring media last attended a vehicle launch featuring a Honda City (that was way back in 2000 when the City Type Z with VTEC engine was introduced) and last week's unveiling of the all-new 2003 model was a very much welcomed affair.

Indeed, the latest Honda City didn't disappoint and, in fact, elicited "oohs" and "aahs" from some of us when the car was finally unveiled.

From the design concept to the technologies it now carries, the all-new Honda City is quite far ahead from its predecessors.

"(The all-new Honda City) is far more than what is usually described by the term 'full-model change.'" This was announced by Satoshi Toshida, COO of the Asia and Oceania region and managing director of Honda Motor Co. Ltd., during the launch held at the Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati City.

Futuristic design

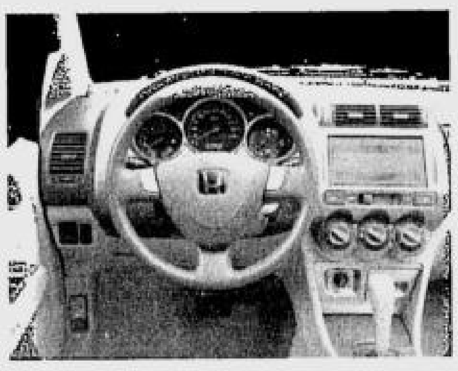
The new Honda City has an uncanny similarity in designs common to electric, hybrid and fuel cell vehicles. It looks modern and at the same time, sporty.

The compact design translates to a short nose and big forward cabin while the lower part of the car's body projects solid-looking stance described Honda designers. Bold lines and aerodynamic refinements add the finishing touch to a photogenic body that is eye-catching from any angle.

"Evincing a fresh dynamic styling, advanced technology and breakthrough versatility and performance, the all-new Honda City is expected to set a new benchmark in the country's compact sedan class," said Mitsunari Takano, president and GM of Honda Cars Philippines.

Latest breakthroughs

Leading the list of the latest breakthroughs within the all-new Honda City is the i-DSI (Intelligent Dual and Sequential Ignition) 1.3 single overhead cam (SOHC) engine, a compact and lightweight powertrain that provides a maximum torque of 2,800 rpm.



THE S variant of the all-new Honda City features Steermatic with CVT that provides its drivers more responsive feel

With the use of the ingenious dual spark plug system (two spark plugs and two valves per cylinder) with individually controlled ignition timing, the all-new Honda City's powerplant offers more rapid and complete combustion, achieving best fuel efficiency in its class.

The all-new Honda City is also equipped with a continuously variable transmission (CVT), which automatically changes driving mode for optimum control.

Mated with the Honda Steermatic and a 7-speed mode commanded by a fingertip from the steering wheel, the all-new Honda City combines the best of automatic and manual transmission in a single system for a seamless, shift-shock-free driving pleasure.

Further enhancing driver's control is the highly advanced and efficient electric power steering (EPS), which provides optimized steering assistance depending on vehicle speed, contributes to the all-new Honda City's economy by using less power.

Honda designers also lent its patent ULT (Utility, Long and Tall seat modes) seats to the all-new Honda City to create exceptional versatility in seating and cargo loading and allow maximum storage size of 1.8 meters in width and 2.0 (Utility mode) to 2.6 meters (Long mode) in length and 1.2 meters (Tall mode) in height.

Latest global platform

The all-new Honda City is based on Honda's latest global platform, which showcases some of Honda's most advanced automotive technology and represents a major development in the company's completely built-up unit export operations in Asia.

This all-new Honda City evolved from the base design of Honda Fit, Japan's best selling model last year and adjudged Japan Car of the Year for 2001 and 2002 said Arnel Doria, marketing division deputy head of Honda Cars Philippines.

Produced in Thailand, this car is also exported in Japan under the name Fit Aria.

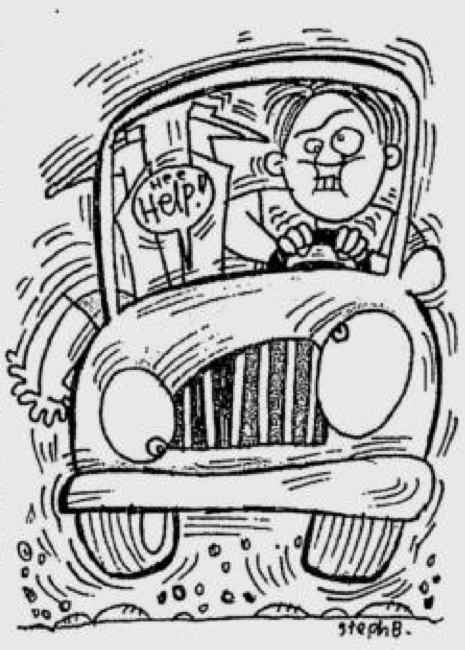
"Definitely, the all-new Honda City will make waves not only here and create new excitement in the industry—reenergizing including this country's passenger market," said Takano.

Available in manual 1.3 i-DSI (A-variant) and in manual 1.3 i-DSI or automatic 1.3 i-DSI CVT (S-Variant), the all-new Honda City can now be viewed at various Honda showrooms. Honda is still waiting for the yet-to-be-imposed tax law on vehicles before it can determine the exact price. The tax law is expected to further lower the all-new Honda City's price (now pegged from P550,000 to P650,000).

The mean streets of Makati

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza



SINCE Makati is the richest city in Metro Manila, its streets are the best in the country, right? Wrong. You only have to drive on Makati Avenue between Senator Gil Puyat Avenue (formerly Buendia Avenue) and J.P. Rizal, or on Ayala Avenue Extension between Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue and Kamagong to experience unbelievably corrugated, bumpy road surfaces that one would not expect to find in the nation's premier city.

Even Ayala Avenue between the Salcedo/H.V. de la Costa and Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue intersections (where the state-of-the-art RCBC Tower is located) is a rough, bone-jarring stretch. Coming from Makati Avenue, the curbside Edsa-bound lane of Pasay Road (now called Arnaiz Avenue) is uneven and bumpy.

The entire length of South Superhighway from President Quirino Avenue in Manila up to and including the Magallanes interchange in Makati rivals Edsa in severity. Like Edsa, the cement surface of the South Superhighway is covered here and there by large, uneven asphalt patches that jolt motorists and commuters. The harshness is carried over to the Buendia Overpass, which has a wavy instead of an even asphalt surface.

Months to repair

I remember that for a long time, a deep cut across the width of the South Superhighway lane turning left on Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue under the Buendia Overpass was creating traffic jams at that intersection, but it took months for the powers that be to notice and repair it.

At least, that was repaired eventually. The same cannot be said of the Magallanes interchange which, with its numerous, rugged asphalt patches, potholes and open seams, appears to be in perpetual disrepair. Not a single portion of the Magallanes interchange is smooth. Going up and down the interchange, whether headed toward Edsa Pasay City, the South Luzon Expressway or Edsa Makati is sheer torture for both car and driver.

Edsa was a beautiful, smooth 12-lane highway until it was ruined by the construction of the Metro Rail Transit infrastructure. Now, a long stretch of Edsa in Makati is bumpy and jagged, as any motorist traversing the northbound or southbound lanes between Buendia Avenue Extension and Guadalupe Bridge will tell you.

Makati City government officials never tire of bragging that Makati hosts the major Philippine and multinational companies, banks and financial institutions, most of the embassies and foreign missions, six 5-star hotels as well as the big shopping malls and hundreds of restaurants and entertainment establishments. This being so, Makati deserves better streets. The taxes paid by the giants of trade and commerce every year must be tremendous, so the city government has the funds to fix Makati's streets. Makati's position as the country's primary financial and business center obliges the Department of Public Works and Highways to maintain in good condition Edsa and the South Superhighway, the national roads passing through Makati territory.

Fuel economy test

Lawyer Bienvenido A. Tan Jr., formerly the Philippine ambassador to Germany, wrote to propose a challenging fuel economy test:

"In order to give the ordinary motorist a real idea about the fuel consumption of the different cars now available in the market, interested car makers should make a run through urban traffic with all its stops, go's and (traffic) jams and then determine what the consumption is.

"I recommend a test that starts from Shoemart in Makati at 10 a.m., down Ayala Avenue, left at Emilia, cross the railroad tracks and turn right on the South Superhighway, then a left on Quirino Avenue, then a right at Taft Avenue.

"Go past Manila City Hall across Jones Bridge to Rosario, on to Reina Regente and Abad Santos up to Balintawak and then right on Edsa up to Makati back to Shoemart. This trip should take between one-and-a-half and two hours. Then we can see what the fuel consumption is like."

Any takers from the car manufacturers?

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Once you've seen a shopping center you've seen a mall.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph

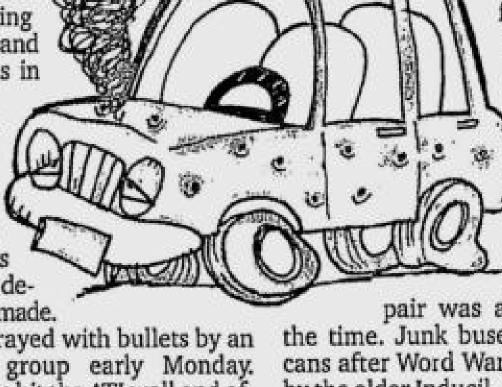
Extortionist attack auto shop anew

By Tessa R. Salazar

AFTER THE HUB of performance racing auto engines was attacked by an armed group last Monday—the second in less than a year—the owner vows that business goes on in his shop's new home in Silang, Cavite, and adds he doesn't regret moving into the new location despite the violent setbacks.

Antonio "Butch" Inducil, owner of ATI, a performance automotive center known for its expertise in engine modification, fast Lancer Evos and engine rebuilding, said his 3500-square-meter high-tech auto shop continues to be a business center for racing enthusiasts and bus companies in the south.

He said that moving to Silang, Cavite, from the original offices in Manila was one of the best decisions he had made.



ATI was sprayed with bullets by an unidentified group early Monday. Several bullets hit the ATI wall and offices, a speedboat and a box-type Lancer. No one was injured.

The ATI auto shop, located in Barangay Puting Kahoy beside Ayala Land's Westgrove Heights, houses some of ATI's 5-star auto service equipment. It has retained its original offices in Manila, where the rest of the equipment are in use.

Inducil told the INQUIRER it was the second time that his facilities were attacked. The first was in December 2002.

He revealed that an individual had been demanding monthly protection money from him for some time now for still unknown reasons.

With his decision to stay on, Inducil has been contemplating on giving in to the demands of the individual, if only to stop the harassment.

Butch had earlier asked barangay tanods to extend their roving times. Barangay Puting Kahoy chair Mario Marquesses, however, said due to limited funding and facilities, barangay tanods stand duty only until midnight.

"The ATI shop is near the highway, which could've been targets of drunk armed men. I told the tanods to extend their roving time," said Marquesses.

ATI has been involved in the automotive business for over 50 years, having stemmed from Inducil's father Cesar pioneering vulcanizing and machining. Cesar's 10-minute vulcanizing repair was an innovation at the time. Junk buses left by Americans after Word War II were restored by the elder Inducil.

The business has evolved into transforming and modifying performance engines for racing cars, complete engine rebuilding, and repair of transmission and engines of units of large bus companies such as Baliwag, Philtranco and Victory.

ATI has also become a German-authorized shop for Z-F transmission repairs. It is working on being an authorized service center for Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution cars in the country.

ATI also has workshops for transmission and engine repairs of fast ferryboats traveling to Cebu, Dumaguete and Bohol.

Mobil 1 named oil fill for Aprilia, Moto Guzzi

EXECUTIVES of ExxonMobil Petroleum and Chemical Holdings Inc. (Empchi) and Ultra Bykes Network recently attended signing ceremonies to formalize the selection of Mobil 1 Motorcycle Oils as the latter's lubricant of choice.

Ultra Bykes Network, a division of Ultra Car Detailing Inc., is the official distributor of Aprilia and Moto Guzzi Motorcycles in the Philippines. Imported directly from Italy, each new motorcycle will be filled with Mobil 1 Racing 4T or Racing 2T, both fully synthetic lubricants especially formulated for motorcycle use.

"The recent entry of Aprilia and Moto Guzzi into the local market has created great anticipation among the riding public," said Leo Campos, lead country manager, Empchi. "We are extremely proud to have been involved in Ultra Bykes' selection of Mobil 1 as its oil of choice. This milestone further validates our commitment to delivering maximum engine performance to all of our customers. From high-performance cars to high-performance motorcycles, consumers can always rely on Mobil 1 to provide the maximum power, protection and performance they need."

Mobil 1 is also used as initial fill, as well as recommended for service fill, in a number of other high-performance vehicles worldwide—cars and bikes alike. ExxonMobil is the leading marketer of synthetic lubricants.

Ultra Bykes' Showroom and Service Center are located at the ground floor, La Fuerza Building, Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City.

Mobil 1 is a trademark of ExxonMobil or one of its subsidiaries.

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MATRIX

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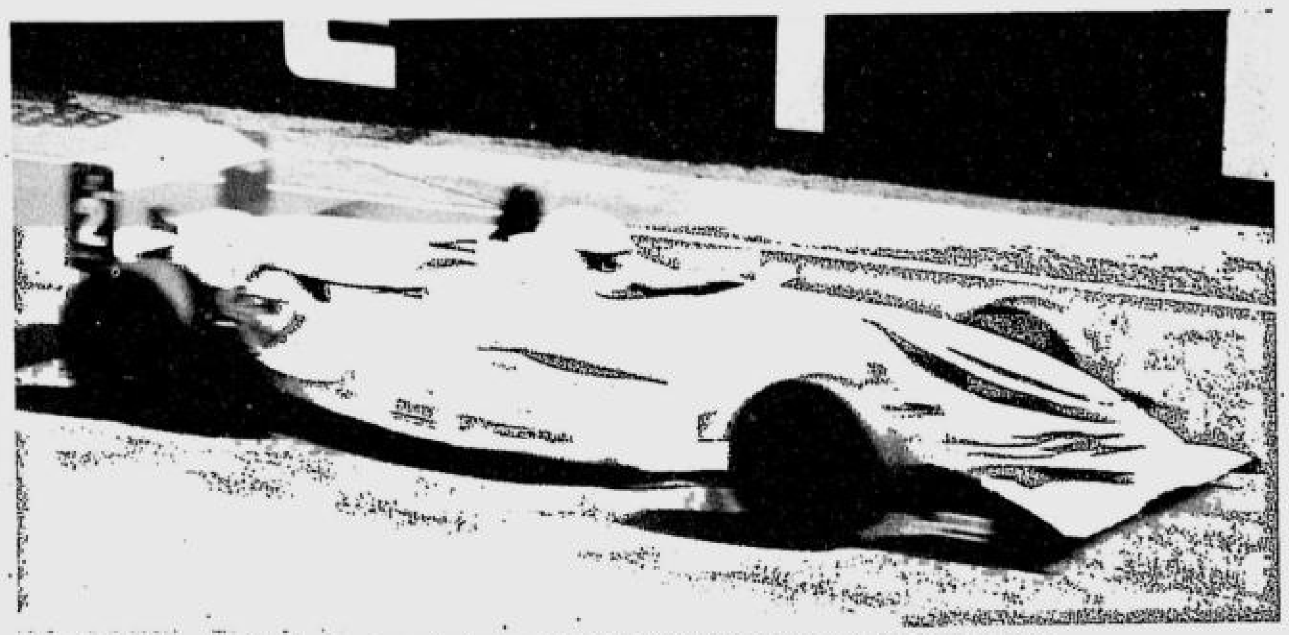
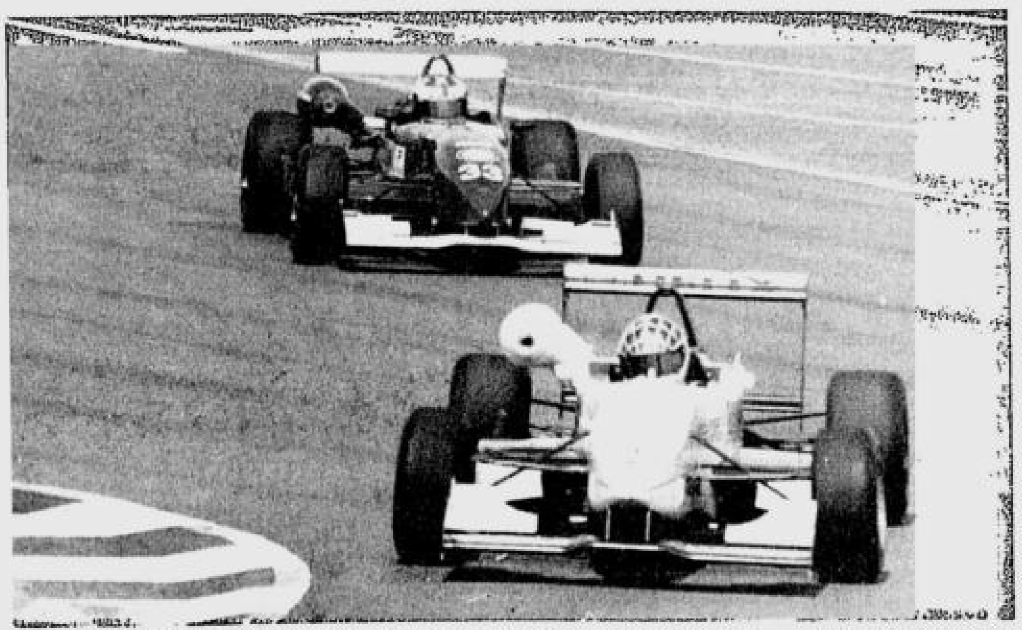
San Fernando-Olongapo
Gapan Road, San Fernando Pampanga
Tel # (045) 961-3977 / 961-1104

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1996, Series of 2003.



THE ASIAN Formula 3 is the best way to start a career that might lead to becoming an F1 driver.



THE PHILIPPINE leg is highlighted by very tight and technical circuit. PHOTOS BY ROGER CARPIO

DESPITE REGIONAL SARS ALERT

Asian Formula 3 off to a good start

By Charles E. Buban

IN EUROPE and elsewhere, they're known as "tifosis," the ever-faithful and passionate followers of Ferrari team and Formula One racing in general.

They would follow their team almost anywhere in the world and they would not accept anything less than seeing their idols popping bottles of champagne at the end of each race day.

A devoted crowd like the tifosis is what makes an event like Formula One race so vibrant, appealing and of course, profitable.

"It's what we would like to develop here in Asia, particularly here in the Philippines, as we promote Asian Formula 3 series in the region," explains Stephen Green of creative director of Times, an international marketing and events specialist that does public promotion of AF3's races, teams and drivers.

Fortunate to push through

"We are proud and at the same time fortunate to have the first two races done here considering the regional alert on the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)," says Jose Eduardo Peña, AF3 chair.

In fact, almost all of the race's foreign competitors, particularly those coming from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China failed to make it to Subic due to SARS alert.

PEÑA

Says Peña: "It's really tough organizing this year's event but we have to push through and hope that in the next races—Malaysia next month, Thailand in July, Korea in August, Japan in September, China in October and again here in the Philippines (Philippine F3 SuperPrix in Batangas Racing Circuit in November)—the SARS is no longer a major issue."

This year's series is sponsored by Yokohama, Denso and Regional Container Lines.

Those who made it to the race include Mark Goddard and Jojo Silverio of Castrol Team Goddard; Mike Potenciano and Pepon Marave of Shell Racing; JP Tuason and Roland Hermoso of Speedtech Asia; and Richard Joson of Denso JF3 Racing.

GODDARD

Stepping stone

The AF3 is often seen by many as a driver's best route into Formula One.

"One of the biggest investments of any team is the driver and the best way to look for them is in these regional races. AF3 is giving drivers the best possible opportunity to progress from karts to a much bigger arena like AF3 and eventually the F1," says Green.

Touted as the region's premier motor racing event, the AF3, organized by the Asian Formula 3 Corp., features a six-leg, 12-race calendar that is held in Malaysia, Japan, Korea, China and in the Philippines where the opening leg (Races 1 and 2) was held last week at the Subic International Raceway in Zambales.

The Philippine leg is one of the most competitive, and the country is considered as one of the best sites for AF3. "(Compared to other tracks in the region) the track here is very tight and technical in nature and produces very close races," according to Peña.

Off to a good start

British driver Goddard is off to a good start defending his AF3 championship crown as he earned the most points at the end of the two races.

"Our mechanics did an impressive job replacing the engine in time for the second race—they were literally tightening bolts as I was strapping in to the car," reveals Goddard whose troubled engine finished second in the first race but managed to capture the next race's checkered flag.

Says Green: "It was indeed exciting having to watch these events unfold before your eyes. Our mission now is to invite more people to watch the race and know the drivers even better."

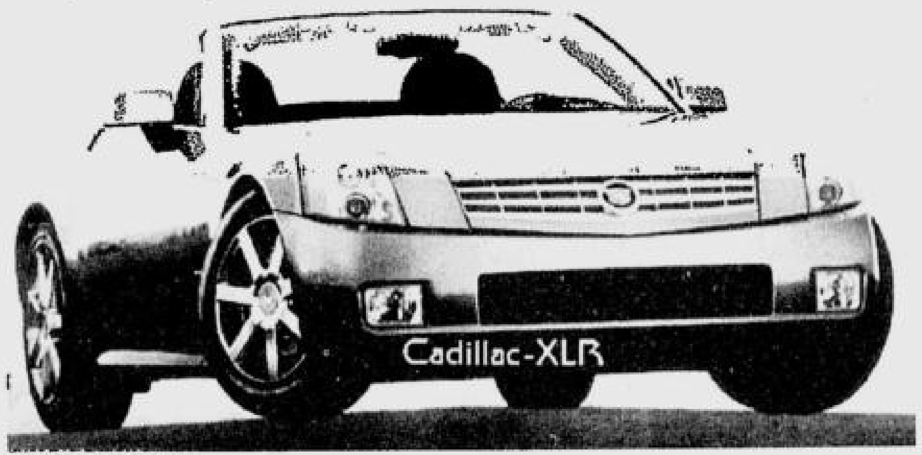
Young market

Green describes the Philippine market as very young but possesses a lot of potential.

"Even though we don't have a circuit within Metro Manila, where most of the fans are located, Subic and Batangas offer a very conducive environment and our job is to bring them to these venues," says Egin Stockinger, Times operations director.

To be held in June is the event called "Behind the Wheels," which is series of event to promote AF3 and its drivers.

"There will be parties, mall and school tours. We're also holding computer games where the general public can go head-to-head with the drivers," reveals Green. "The bottom line is—we are creating a wider fan base—to bring AF3 to the masses."



CADILLAC XLR

Feasting your eyes on new Cadillac XLR

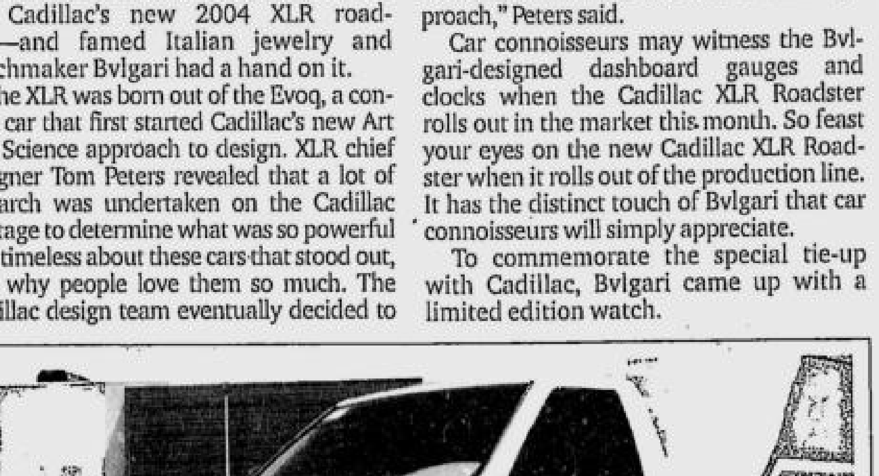
LUXURY and technology work together. And in the case of two renowned names in the world of automotive and jewelry, a proud heritage, timelessness and passion for excellence all contribute to an explosive tandem that can generate high-level consumer interest.

Modern sophistication and a superb design that speaks of power and excitement are the dominant characteristics of the Cadillac's new 2004 XLR roadster—and famed Italian jewelry and watchmaker Bvlgari had a hand on it.

The XLR was born out of the Evoq, a concept car that first started Cadillac's new Art and Science approach to design. XLR chief designer Tom Peters revealed that a lot of research was undertaken on the Cadillac heritage to determine what was so powerful and timeless about these cars that stood out, and why people love them so much. The Cadillac design team eventually decided to recapture the essence of luxury by combining dramatic, in-your-face style, state-of-the-art, no-holds-barred technology and distinctive personality in order to make a unique design statement." Bvlgari came in when it was enlisted to help develop instrument panels for the Imaj and Vizon concept cars. "Bvlgari helped balance the high-tech look of the XLR with a level of cachet commensurate with our Art and Science approach," Peters said.

Car connoisseurs may witness the Bvlgari-designed dashboard gauges and clocks when the Cadillac XLR Roadster rolls out in the market this month. So feast your eyes on the new Cadillac XLR Roadster when it rolls out of the production line. It has the distinct touch of Bvlgari that car connoisseurs will simply appreciate.

To commemorate the special tie-up with Cadillac, Bvlgari came up with a limited edition watch.



EXCLUSIVE BODY MAKER

PLDT recently chose Centro Manufacturing Corp. to be the body maker of its latest fleet of service vehicles as it revs up its commitment to provide excellent telecommunication services to the public. Centro is also the exclusive body manufacturer of the Isuzu Passenger Van, which is steadily eating up a significant slice in the AUV market because of its marked advantage like its bigger seating capacity; split-type benches; strong aircon and bonnet-type front that houses the engine.

The jeepney and its intriguing ancestry

By A. J. Makalintal
Contributor

(First of two parts)

THE PUBLIC utility jeepneys we have come to love as a national icon are slowly becoming "uncool" to ride for most people who go out on weekends, especially those who frequent places such as The Fort. Perhaps people should be aware of one historical fact that binds the jeepney and The Fort together—that is, its historical significance goes a long way back to the time of war. Or better yet, to appreciate today's jeepney, one could go back in time and rediscover the jeepney's intriguing ancestry, and how and why today, there is a renewed interest in the jeepney's military vehicle ancestor, the original jeep.

Timewarp at The Fort

High-end bars and restaurants are concentrated on an area inside The Fort, the hip name that developers christened Fort Bonifacio with when it was opened for commercial purposes years ago. But during the 1940s, Fort Bonifacio was named Fort McKinley where the US Army held training exercises with the Philippine Army for World War II preparations. And the jeepney's predecessor, the jeep, was with those armies, also gearing up for battle.

The jeep was an important part of the world's history, and of course Manila shared an equally important role in history, too, during that time of war. But first, we have to differentiate the war jeep from our common public utility jeepneys of today.

Not a jeepney

The original jeep was the father of the four-wheel-drive vehicle. The US Army commissioned three US car manufacturers—Ford, Willys-Overdrive and Bantam—to produce jeeps for the coming war. Although most found its design to be ugly, performance-wise, detractors' jaws fell to the ground when the capacity of the jeep was demonstrated to them. Of course, at that time, who ever saw a vehicle that can be driven through rough dirt terrain or snow, can endure harsh weather and effectively transport goods, weapons and men? During that time, only the jeep did the job.

It was touted that the jeep was the new innovation that won the war for the Americans, and it is quite interesting to discover how Filipinos came to love the jeep. But first, how did it get here, and when?

To RP shores

It would be tempting to say that the history of the jeep in the Philippines started with the return of the conquering American forces led by Gen. Douglas Mac Arthur during the closing days of 1944. This is not true, however.

The history of the jeep in this country began much earlier than that. It began during the closing months of 1941, when the threat of war loomed large in the Philippines and all over Southeast Asia. Just before Dec. 7 of that year, a shipment of early jeeps, as well as other cars and trucks, must have arrived here.

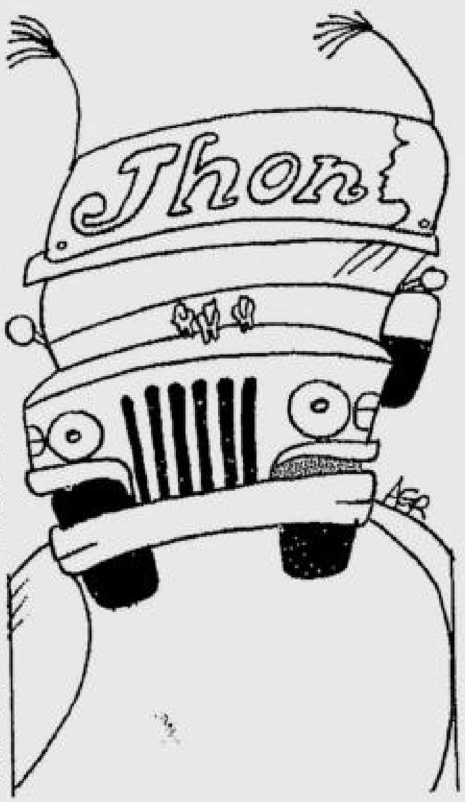
There are numerous photos published in Life Magazine of Ford GP jeeps in use by the US Army taken here in Manila.

There appears to be no doubt that the three preproduction prototypes of jeeps—the Ford GP, Bantam BRC and Willys MA models—were in the Philippines even before the outbreak of World War II. There are even reports that during the last few days of 1941, when the arrival of the Japanese Forces was imminent, the US Army threw open its warehouses in the Port Area and invited Filipinos to take out what they wanted: foodstuff, clothing, equipment and vehicles including jeeps.

The jeep shall return

On Oct. 20, 1944 when General Mac Arthur returned to the country and landed in Leyte, the first of the standardized (and popular) Willys MB and Ford GPW model jeeps touched Philippine soil, and that was the beginning of the Filipino's love for the jeep. After the cessation of hostilities in September 1945, large numbers of jeeps were released to the Filipino public. Perhaps a small number of jeeps were "released" to the public via the black market by US soldiers.

Apart from the US Army, a large operator of jeeps was the Philippine government, both the administrative and civilian agencies as well as the Philippine Army which, by this time, had been given large numbers of almost new jeeps and trucks. In fact, the Philippine Army Signal Corps, then based on the road to and about a kilometer from the University of the Philippines, had jeeps that were in clean, well-painted, and tip-top mechanical shape.



Inventing the jeepney

The examples above constituted the first major influx of jeeps in the Philippine scene. From these jeeps, the first jeepneys were developed.

The first one was an ordinary Ford MB or Willys GPW with the rear panel cut open, a rear step and rudimentary seat cushions provided over the rear wheels, and the rear seat mounted to the right of the driver's seat. The new contraption can carry six paying passengers and it was called an "autocalesa" or AC, recalling the Bantam-based Autocalesa during the prewar years operating around the Plaza Lawton area.

Soon, the jeepney was extended to the rear to accommodate three seated passengers on each side, which made a total of nine paying passengers: this was termed the TPU, the forerunner of today's jeepneys or PUJs. The usual fare was 10 centavos per person per trip within Metro Manila.

What's Britney Spears got to do with Vios?

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

TOYOTA tapped Hollywood heartthrob Brad Pitt as model for the Toyota Altis only a while back. It proved to be a brilliant move. Altis became a best selling Toyota model; the car, with tremendous help from Brad Pitt, helped trigger Toyota's return to the top of the auto industry.

But with Brad Pitt, you think you've seen the best of the best from Toyota? I mean, is Brad Pitt Toyota's remaining certified global superstar to endorse a Toyota model?

Think again, buddies.

* * *

Just when we thought Toyota's done with the celluloid world, with uncorking the rich and the famous as endorsers for new Toyota models, here comes the giant car maker once more unwrapping its surprise package of the year: Britney Spears.

Who doesn't know Britney Spears?

From Dingdong to Dolphy, Britney Spears is idol nonpareil. A tough act to follow, Britney Spears is one of the world's icons today in the pop music industry. If you ask me, I like her more than Madonna, and I consider her almost an equal of Jennifer Lopez. I also count her as one of those rare modern-day belters who has class more than charisma.

* * *

Now what's Britney Spears got to do with Toyota again?

Vios, buddies, Vios. This is Toyota's latest car model which will be launched today (Thursday, May 15) at Le Pavillon on Roxas Boulevard near the Manila Bay Toyota dealership.

Vios, in case you want to know, means "to move forward." The Toyota model aims "to move forward" with Britney Spears, the lady whose powerful voice has captured the imagination of the world. As chief endorser of Vios, Britney Spears will surely capture the attention of the world's young in much the way she had pushed to record-breaking charts her super hit songs, "Oops! I Did It Again" and "Hit Me Baby One More Time."

* * *

If you won't be "hit" by Vios, either you are lost in your own weird zone or something, or simply a rebel without a cause.

Listen to Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.'s Ariel de Jesus: "Our new car is an entry-level vehicle that will cater to the young market with its modern body design and world-class features."

Who comprises the young market again? I guess anybody who thinks young is part of that market, including my 83-year-old Insan Taby Tabaniag, who adores The Beatles like my grandson Mayo, who turned 6 last May 2.

* * *

I have unearthed some features/qualities of the new Toyota car and so, you'll read them all first here. So, as the great, lamented radio station dzHP loved to say then: "Remember, you heard it first on dzHP." So not to brag, you read it first here.

Aside from having a new compact design, the Vios has a spacious interior, world-class safety features and a new engine powered by the VVT-i technology. The car is available in both 1300 and 1500 engines.

Ballyhooed as a modern, if not futuristic, vehicle, the Vios will reflect the dynamic lifestyle of today's generation. The sleek, multireflector headlamps and the front grille add to the distinction of the Vios' youthful character. Its doors, tires and color-keyed side protection moldings emanate a fresh and yet, classy design. Even its sharply slanted rear fender and protruding rear bumpers provide a sporty profile for the new Toyota model.

* * *

The Vios' aerodynamic design reduces wind noise, improves acceleration and maneuverability and promises to ensure better fuel efficiency. Look, with a body design that cheats gravity and drag, its "coefficient drag" (CD) of a record low 0.30 is similar to that of a Lexus GS300, one of America's best selling vehicles.

The new Vios is available in three variants—the 1.5V A/T, 1.5V M/T and the 1.3E M/T. What's more, the new model reemphasizes the importance of the child-lock protection. It also boasts of the latest in GOA (Global Outstanding Assessment) body which is all-too critical to safe driving. It has front fog lamps and side-door impact beams for protection in case of a side impact. And its large-capacity trunk gives more space for more convenience.

You need more?

* * *

OK, the Vios has the same seat structure as the new Camry, one of the world's top-rated cars for years now. Equipped with the TVSS (Toyota Vehicle Security System), the new model has the keyless entry system and power outer mirrors, power windows and power door locks. It has cellular-phone holders (my dream has finally come true). Its CD box can store up to 12 CDs. The Vios will be available in all Toyota authorized dealers by the second week of June.

* * *

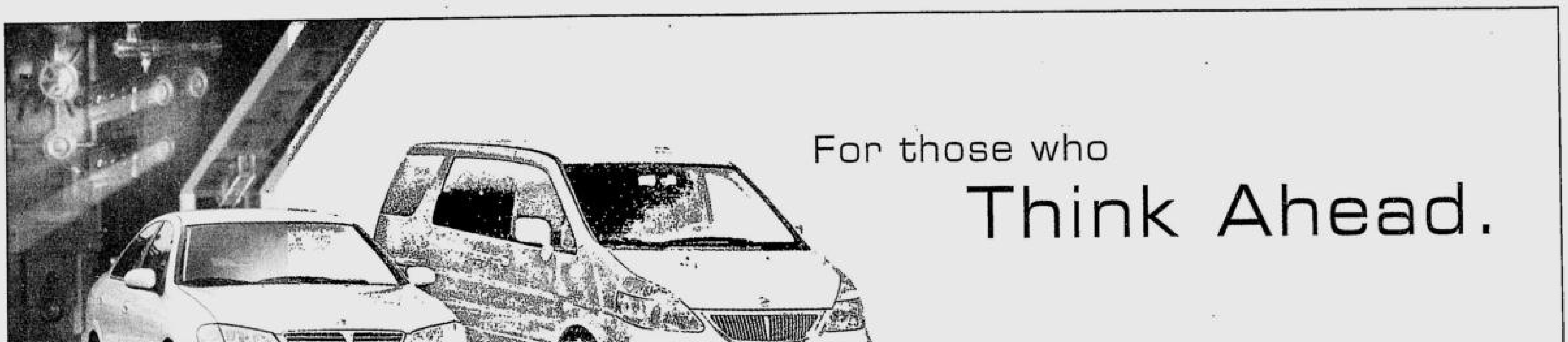
Lastly, here's a word from Hyundai.

The ever-surging Korean car company, which made a world impact by endorsing the last World Cup of Football, has opened an efficient after-sales service program in all its dealerships nationwide.

The bargain consists of four comprehensive, yet affordable after-sales service packages that will keep the Hyundai vehicle in top shape in time for the opening of schools next month. The package is a "must" for Hyundai owners if only to emphasize the significance of maintaining a vehicle from the day it was bought.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Never attempt to drive when you are sleepy. You might "sleep" for the rest of your life once you meet an accident.



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Privatization of transmission facilities on track

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PRIVATIZATION of the country's power transmission system advances to another phase after a number of bidders have expressed interest in taking part in the due diligence study of the facilities.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr., who also chairs the privatization, bidding and award committee, said in a statement that at least one bidder would get the bid documents and the information memorandum "within a week".

Potential bidders surfaced after the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., the government body tasked to privatize the transmission facilities, wrapped up the roadshow held in key cities in Europe, North America and Asia.

The roadshow kicked off in April and was aimed at drumming up investor interest in the privatization of the facilities.

"We are hopeful that we will (be able to proclaim) the winning concessionaire by the end of July," Perez said.

He said that the Psalm board of directors met yesterday and affirmed the timetable for the transmission system's privatization.

Cement prices stable

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry yesterday claimed that the imposition of a provisional duty on cement imports has led to lower and more stable cement prices.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the price of the popular Portland cement has been kept at P102 per bag or 18.4 percent lower than its price of P125 a year ago.

Roxas said prices were stable even during these summer months when prices usually rise because construction activity is at its peak.

Roxas said the DTI has likewise stepped up the monitoring of cement prices to protect consumers from unscrupulous retailers.

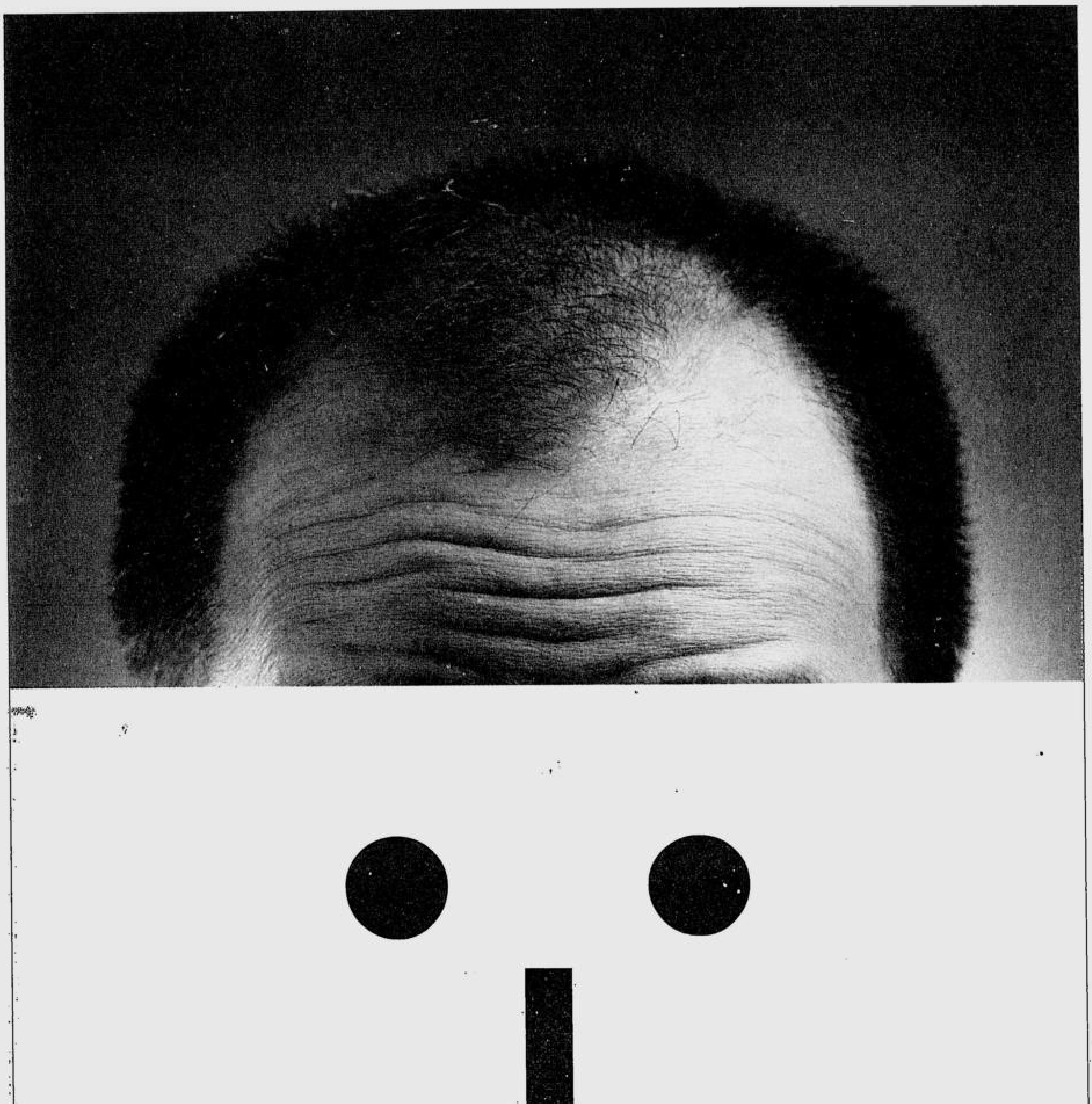
Roxas said the low cement prices should allay fears of consumers that prices of cement would shoot up due to the continued imposition of additional duties amounting to P20.60 per bag.

The Consumers Union of the Philippines had earlier asked the Supreme Court to resolve a case filed by the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp. in order to stop the collection of the duty on imported cement.

The DTI imposed the provisional duty of P20.60 per 40-kilogram bag of imported cement in December 2001 pending the Tariff Commission's review on its decision to impose permanent duty and quotas on cement imports.

But the TC rejected the petition for permanent protection against cement imports prompting Philcemcor to file the case to prevent the DTI from lifting the provisional duty.

The CUP, on the other hand, contends that cement imports play a role in maintaining "contestable markets" and would prevent the world's largest cement makers from dominating the cement industry.



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ATO unveils ₱1.9-B airport upgrade plan

By Abigail L. Ho

THE AIR Transportation Office has earmarked P1.9 billion for the upgrade and modernization of air navigation facilities in at least 25 major airports nationwide.

About P1.5 billion of the project cost would be shouldered by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation under the 25th Yen Loan Package.

The balance will come from government counterpart funds.

In a statement issued yesterday, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the five-year project would involve the upgrade of some airports' communication, navigation and surveillance and air traffic management (CNS/ATM) systems.

Modernizing these equipment, he said, would "enhance the safety, reliability and efficiency of air traffic and airspace system in the Philippines."

The CNS/ATM Systems Development Project is a satellite-based technology designed to effectively and efficiently control and manage air traffic within the Manila Flight Information Region (FIR).

With the new CNS/ATM systems, information on regional air traffic control facilities will be consolidated at the air traffic management center.

"The project is aimed at developing a dynamic and integrated CNS/ATM system, using satellite technology that will provide a more efficient, safe and reliable air traffic and airspace in the country," Mendoza said.

SPI Tech posts ₱154-M profit

By Doris C. Dumlao

LEADING IT service exporter SPI Technologies chalked up a net profit of P154 million in the first quarter, a turnaround from the P30-million net loss posted in the same period last year.

SPI told the Philippine Stock Exchange that the growth came from the strong sales of its business process outsourcing (BPO) services units and call center business which accounted for 64 percent and 36 percent of total revenues, respectively.

Consolidated revenues were up 80 percent to P766 million from P425 million registered in the same period last year.

On the BPO units, SPI said its content conversion business reported on-time and on-target delivery and quality submissions for major client Elsevier Science.

Now on its second year of operations, SPI Content Sciences Inc. was awarded the contract in 2001 to convert approximately 40 to 50 million pages of Elsevier's SSTM journals—the world's largest digital content conversion project.

SPI Content Sciences generated 31 percent of the company's revenues for the first quarter.

The company said its litigation support unit likewise continued to expand its services to direct clients and re-sellers, and accounted for 16 percent of the revenues for the period.

The unit registered a 70 percent increase in revenues from a year ago, "due to the aggressive direct marketing that led to the continued expansion of its client base."

The publisher services unit, which expanded its service to include book production with the acquisition of Boston-based Achorn Graphics last year, accounted for 12 percent of the company's consolidated revenues.

Meanwhile, fledgling call center subsidiary eTelecare International, Inc. posted an 88 percent revenue growth to P278 million in the first quarter this year.

The call center unit, which has eight clients and 12 programs, has total capacity of more than 1,000 seats for its two call centers located in Eastwood Park, Libis and in PBCOM Tower, Makati.

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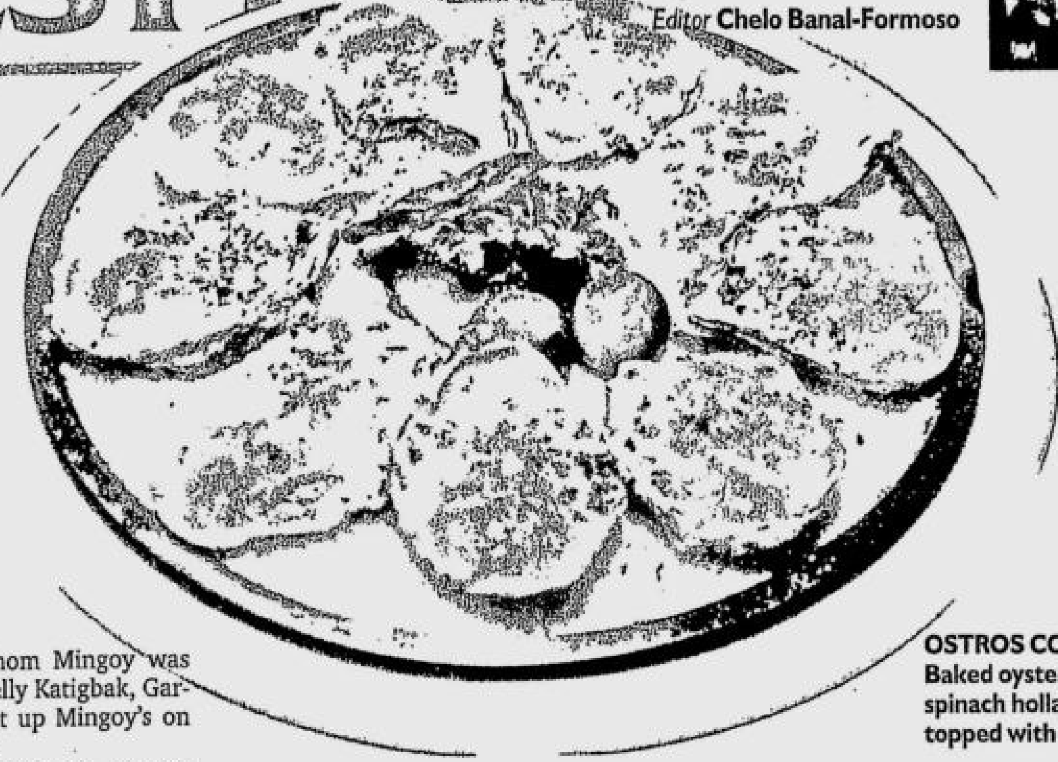
Young Filipinos get a bite of their past

Una Mas' Nina Garcia says Spain's time has come—in the food business, that is



OSTROS CON ESPINACOS. Baked oysters with creamy spinach hollandaise sauce topped with Parmesan cheese

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Betoy Johnson

With a shared history of almost 400 years, it is inevitable that Filipino cooking would owe a lot from the Spaniards. For a while, Spanish restaurants almost all but disappeared as hipper eating places, especially fast-food joints, emerged.

But now Spanish fare is again emerging as a major player in the food arena. The growing popularity and appreciation of Spain's wines are helping generate interest in the country's food.

Moreover, while other cuisines may use similar ingredients, those that go into Spanish cooking are distinctly indigenous products.

"Spain's time has come," says Nina Garcia, owner of Una Mas, formerly known as Mingoy's. "Filipinos are eager to try new things. They love to eat ethnic at all levels."

Though the cooking of Spain is distinctive, its characteristics are familiar to Filipinos and thus appealing on many levels.

"Spanish cooking, with its strong family roots, is as much about rustic, comforting traditional dishes as it is about fresh ingredients and locally made products," Garcia says.

History

The first Mingoy's restaurant opened at the Magallanes Commercial Center in Makati. The restaurant became popular for dishes like Tapas, Sopa de Ajo, Lengua Estofado, Callos, Rabo de Toro, Agachonas, Bacalao à la Vizcaina and Paella.

In 1999, the Katigbak family acquired a majority interest in the company of Domingo Jocson, after whom Mingoy was named. Spearheaded by Nelly Katigbak, Garcia's mother, the family set up Mingoy's on Meralco Avenue in Ortigas.

After two years, the Katigbaks opened Twist at Eastwood City Walk in Libis. This was followed in 2002 by Una Mas on the G/F Greenbelt 2, Esperanza Avenue, Makati.

Designed by Mike Pizarro, Una Mas is an upscale restaurant with a Spanish Renaissance setting and warm and elegant interiors.

Amalia Jocson, the original chef of Mingoy's, is now the chef of Una Mas.

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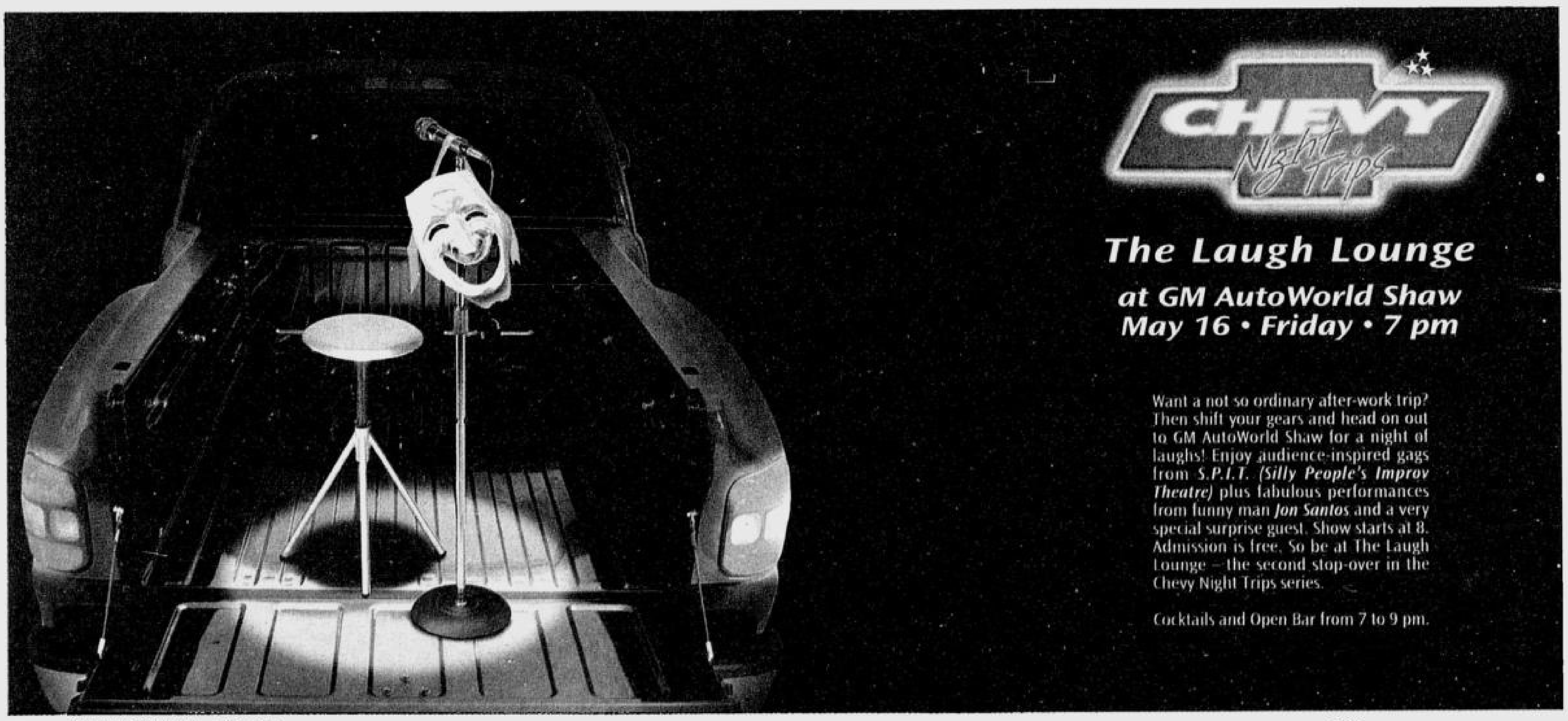
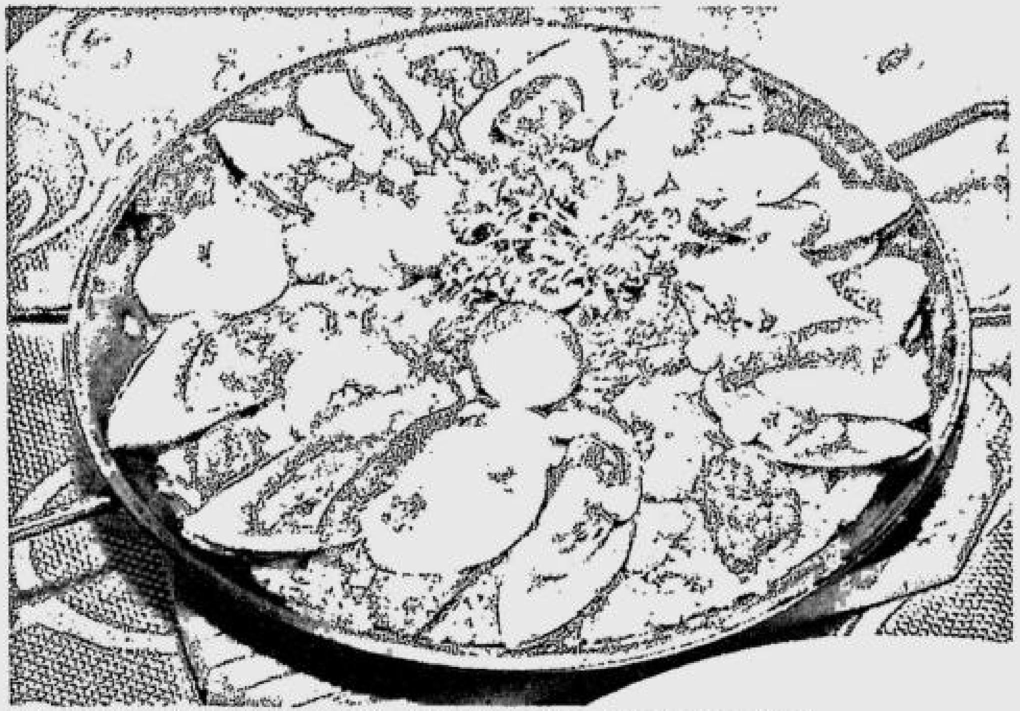
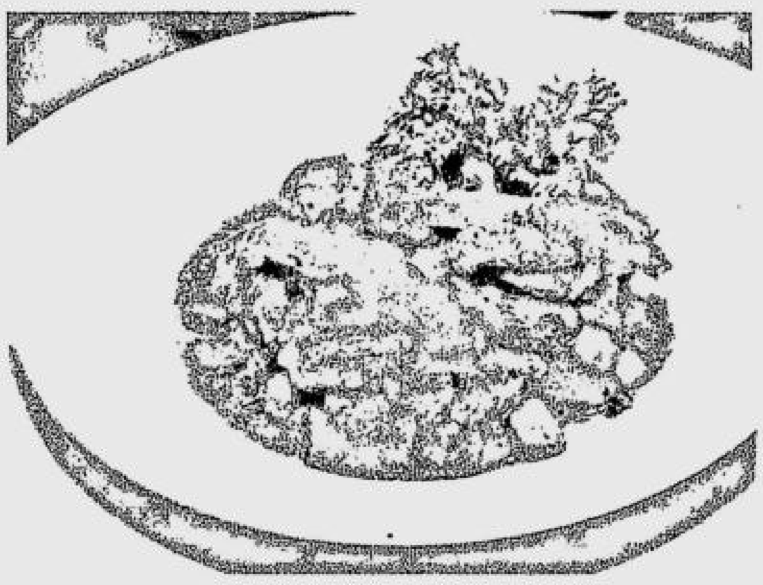
MEGAMALL Michelle/Shiela 631-3869
PASAY RD Cher/Butcy 887-1335
PASIG Malcolm/Kaye 681-5333
SALCEDO Lizelle 814-0138
SM NORTH Ruth/Mitch 929-5429
SUBIC Beth 252-6514


CHEVY Night Trips
The Laugh Lounge
at GM AutoWorld Shaw
May 16 • Friday • 7 pm
Want a not so ordinary after-work trip? Then shift your gears and head on out to GM AutoWorld Shaw for a night of laughs! Enjoy audience-inspired gags from *S.P.I.T. (Silly People's Improv Theatre)* plus fabulous performances from funny man *Jon Santos* and a very special surprise guest. Show starts at 8. Admission is free. So be at The Laugh Lounge – the second stop-over in the Chevy Night Trips series.
Cocktails and Open Bar from 7 to 9 pm.
Also brought to you by: RED BULL
GM AutoWorld SHAW 500 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Watch out for other Chevy Night Trips: The Music Studio @ GM AutoWorld Quezon Avenue • The Game Room @ GM AutoWorld Pampanga
CHEVROLET

LAMB CUTLET. Marinated lamb cutlets enveloped in a potato crust and pan-fried to a golden brown served with sweet chili and rosemary jus



PAELLA ESPAÑOLA. Valencian rice dish with chorizo, chicken and seafood



CALLOS MADRILEÑA. Stewed tripe with *garbanzos* and chorizo

Young Filipinos get a bite of their past

THE BAR of Una Mas displays a variety of Spanish wines.

From page C1

Not so intimate

The current generation of Filipinos hasn't developed the same intimate relationship with gazpacho or salt cod that it has with pizza or burgers. So the first hurdle is to get potential customers to consider a Spanish meal.

Tapas offer a natural introduction to Spanish cooking. Some restaurants and bars use *tapas* to introduce the wines and cuisine of Spain.

So Una Mas offers Tapas Calientes (Hot Tapas) like baked oysters with white wine sauce, marinated tenderloin bits served with garlic vinegar, pan-fried Spanish sausages, pan-fried chicken-filled croquettes, mushrooms sautéed in garlic, chilies and olive oil, deep-fried batter-dipped squid served with a tangy tartar sauce and shrimp sauteed in garlic, chilies and olive oil.

There are also Tapas Frias (Cold Tapas) such as heart of banana slices marinated in mustard vinaigrette and local anchovies marinated in vinegar and olive oil served with pickled radish.

LENGUA CON SETAS. Braised ox tongue in red wine mushroom sauce

DESIGNED by Mike Pizarro, Una Mas has a Spanish Renaissance setting.

Garcia plans to transform Una Mas into a *tapas* bar on weekends and feature piano music or stand-up comedy acts.

Aside from *tapas*, the restaurant also serves soup, salad, seafood, grilled items, beef, chicken, pork and lamb dishes. Buffet lunch and dinner are offered everyday, except Saturday noon, of oyster dishes, paella and *tapas* for only P395.

"Una Mas keeps the tradition of Mingoy's alive. We never scrimp on ingredients; we don't do shortcuts. We give diners value-for-money meals by serving generous portions," Garcia says.

While some people may think that *tapas* and paella are all Spain has to offer, chefs say the dishes stir culinary curiosity and generate interest in Spanish dishes. In fact, *tapas* are becoming so mainstream this category of appetizers is now used by other restaurants to refer to any "small plate" of different tidbits.

"Those little dishes, sharing food, the festive atmosphere—those make Una Mas a vibrant space," says Garcia.

Una Mas (tel. 757-3357 and 757-3358) is open daily, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; 6-10:30 p.m. (Monday-Thursday); and 6-11:30 p.m. (Friday-Sunday).

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

JOSEFINA Katigbak Garcia, owner of Una Mas

Gourmet cooking classes in the merry month of May

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts cooking class schedule is as follows: May 16—Easy Gourmet Barbecues and Side Dishes: Chicken Tandoori with Saffron Couscous, Persian Kebabs with Persian Rice Pilaf, Portuguese Piri-piri Chicken with Arroz Portuguese, Lamb Kebab with Greek Salad

May 19—Japanese 101 Part 2: Miso Soup, Chawan Mushi, Katsudon, Chicken Donburi, Grilled Gindara, Katsu Curry, Chicken Terriyaki

May 21—(morning class) Of Crabs, Prawns and Steamed Fish 1: Than Long Crabs, Crabs in Crab Fat and Butter Sauce (Mantecado), Black Bean Steamed Fish, My Version of the Famous Chinese Style Steamed Fish, Honey Nut Prawns with Continental Fried Rice, Prawns Grilled in Lemon with Garlic Citrus Oil; (afternoon Class) Pasta Twists: Chicken Caesar Salad, Gambas Al Ajillo, Salpicado, Chorizo and Garlic, Taco, Seafood Paella

May 23—Basic Gourmet Cooking: Cream of Squash and Apple Soup, Fried Calamari Salad with Mixed Greens and Onion Leek Dressing, Salt Crust Baked Snapper with Herbed Aioli, Roast Chicken with Figs in Port Wine, Beef Stroganoff with Scallop Potatoes, Grand Marnier Souffle with Crème Anglaise

May 26—Gourmet Breakfast "Special Class": Over 14 breakfast recipes. Pancake and Waffle Buffet (six variations) with all new homemade syrups and fruit sauces, breakfast steaks and sausages, egg variations: omelettes and scrambled eggs gourmet style, breakfast casserole and fruit juices. (P2,000+ingredients)

May 28—(morning class) My favorite chocolate cake collection: Chocolate Cakes with Soft Chocolate Centers and Caramel Coulis, Double Chocolate Cake, Triple Chocolate Cake, Praline and Mascarpone Cake, Warm Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Nut Brittle; (afternoon class) Favorite Mexican Staples: The Best Nacho Cheese Dip Ever, Tex-mex Burrito with Chili Con Carne Sauce, Classic Beef Tacos, Crisp Fried Seafood Tacos, Chiken Burrito, Mexican Rice, Salsas and Sauces

May 30—New Age Roasts and Side Dishes: Rack of Pork Chops with Apple Onion Marmalade and Pineapple Cucumber Salad, Sweet Glazed Roast Duck With Cassava and Taro Puree, Ricotta Stuffed Chicken with Smoked Bacon and Brocolli and Green Pea Puree, Pepper Crusted Rib-eye Roast with Coriander Relish and Roasted Garlic Bread

June 2—Pritchon Made Easy: Crisp Fried Lechon de Leche done my way, Served Peking Style with Homemade Flavored Pancakes and 12 Sauces

Monday and Friday classes, start at 9 a.m.; Wednesdays, morning class at 9 a.m.-12 p.m., afternoon class at 1:30-4: 30 p.m.

Prior reservations would be most appreciated. For reservations and a complete class schedule, call Cynthia at 928-9296, 927-3008 or 633-5162.

The Reggie Aspiras School of Culinary Arts is on the 3/F Bon Appetit, Shagri-La Edsa, Mandaluyong.

Step-by-step demo of 3 dishes

MAKATI Shangri-La will hold the last of its five-course culinary class series on May 24, 10 a.m. at Quezon Ballroom A.

Executive chef Christopher Romine, assisted by executive sous chef Thomas Figove and executive pastry chef Xavier Castello will do a step-by-step demonstration of three dishes from Island Café, namely Pumpkin Creme Soup with Basil Pesto for appetizer and Steamed Sea Bass with Hot Soy Sesame Vinaigrette for the main dish. The session's dessert feature will be Banana and Cherry Crumble. The class is priced at P1,100.

Participants will receive a complete specially-made Culinary Academy apron and chef's hat plus a kit containing printed and CD-ROM versions of the menu. At the end of the session, attendees will be treated to lunch at Island Café consisting of the demonstrated menu.

Call 840-0884 or 813-8888 local 7588 /7599.

Carelessness by optical shops can harm your eyes

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

THERE are horrifying ways your eyes could be adversely affected by careless technicians of optical shops. Last time, a reader wrote to us how her contact lenses were inadvertently mixed with another customer's when she had them cleaned in a laboratory.

This time, a woman physician shares her experience to warn the public about irresponsible optical shops.

J. Marcelo went to a reputable optical shop at Harrison Plaza to have her contact lenses boiled and cleaned last April 28. This was a shop she and her family had been patronizing since 1995. She retrieved her lenses two days later and had been wearing it for several hours when she noticed that her right vision was blurred and there seemed to be a foreign object in her eye. She also felt dizzy. She returned to the optical shop and found later that her lenses were erroneously switched with the lenses of another customer.

Marcelo got her own contact lenses back, but that was not the end of the story. Her eye was still red, and the irritating feeling of having a foreign object in it remained.

When the problem did not ease after six days, she consulted an ophthalmologist who found that her eyelid was infected with *Staphylococcus blepharitis*, a condition that might have been caused by the chemicals and toxins in the lenses that were not boiled properly.

"I had to rest my eyes, refrain from staying up late, and have an antibiotic eye drop every four hours for one week. I want to share this experience with your readers and warn them to consult an ophthalmologist first before going to an optical shop if they feel there is something wrong with their eyes."

Touch Mobile replies

Readers J. Barrera and M. Roslinda should send their mobile phone numbers to Touch Mobile so Customer Care can act on their complaints (published in this column, May 8). Orly Ramas, publicist for Touch Mobile, wrote:

"We wish to inform you that after your call to Joyce Capacillo (chief, Acquisition Section), Touch Mobile customer service immediately advised the complainants by e-mail to give their mobile phone numbers so that their system can be pinpointed for further investigation. To this day, both customers have not given their number."

Other consumer concerns

Rafoncel Te of Davao City wrote about the sewing machine "genie" she bought from Value Vision. "I had to return it for replacement because of factory defect. Several months have passed but the company has not sent the replacement as promised," she complained.

Here's good news. We called the telemarketing firm and was informed by Vince Guillermo of Value Vision that the replacement would be sent to Te within the week. Guillermo apologized for the delay and explained that the former telemarketer handling the complaint resigned a month ago.

Unfortunately for reader M. del Valle Cruz, there is a very slim chance of collecting the $500 remittance sent to him by his father in California through a local travel agency. He complained that he could not find the travel agency. We checked the address of the travel agency and confirmed that it had indeed transferred to an unknown location.

Cruz's best option is to advise his father to get a refund from the California foreign exchange company that handled the remittance.

More on credit collectors

V. San Jose, a Visa cardholder, shares with us her experience with credit card collectors who have no qualms about disclosing customer information to other people. "I settle my account regularly, except (when) I was hospitalized and couldn't remit my payments. As I expected, the credit collectors called up relentlessly to remind me about the delayed payment. My husband got one of the calls and was dismayed when the credit collector disclosed the full details of my credit balance. Why couldn't collectors exercise discretion in matters that should be just between the credit card company and the customer?"

From R. Bunuan of Fairview, Quezon City: "A woman called several times asking for my sister Carla, who happened to be in her office. (After a while), she gave me her name and left her telephone number, but refused to tell me the nature of her call. She insisted it was personal. Not hiding her disgust, she asked me rudely, 'Are you sure you are not Carla?' When my sister arrived, she called the woman and found out she was a credit card collector. My sister reported her rudeness to the manager who promised to do something about the employee's disgusting behavior."

Other comments

L. Gonzaga griped that it was almost impossible to access the Standard Chartered credit card hotline. "I called the number (830-1111) to make inquiries and got a recorded message. I waited for a long time for a customer service representative until the line went dead. I tried again and got the same result."

We called the number and had the same frustrating experience as Gonzaga.

A reader from Five Ace Printing commented on the parking fee imposed by Greenhills shopping center: "It's only fair that paying customers enjoy free parking space. They should be issued validation stamps with their purchase receipts that they can present to the parking lot guards so they won't be charged. On the other hand, it's only right that mallers who don't buy anything pay for parking space."

Reader Donna R. commented that sale discounts are applied differently on credit card and cash purchases. She wrote: "I bought an item that was advertised as 20 percent (less than) the tag price. However when I paid for it with my card, the cashier said the discount for credit card purchase was only 10 percent on some items and 5 percent on others. The 20 percent discount only applied to cash purchases."

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph or lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

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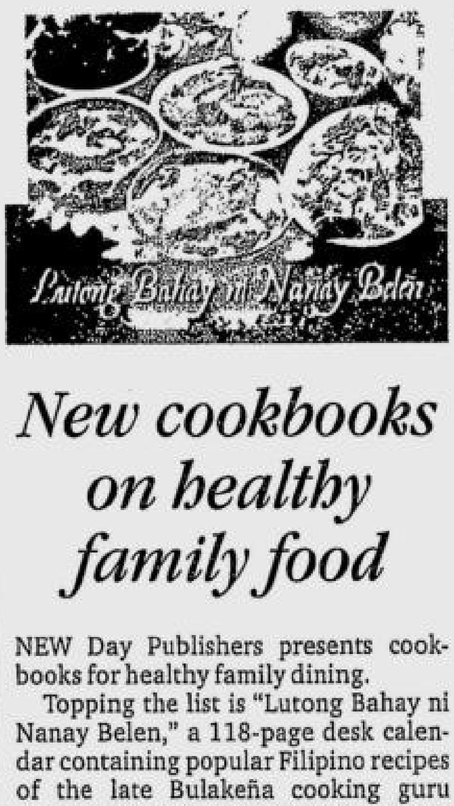

New cookbooks on healthy family food

NEW Day Publishers presents cookbooks for healthy family dining.

Topping the list is "Lutong Bahay ni Nanay Belen," a 118-page desk calendar containing popular Filipino recipes of the late Bulakeña cooking guru Avelina delos Santos. The collection is compiled by Dr. Florita Enriquez and edited by NDP executive director Bezalie Bautista-Uc-Kung.

"100+1 Banana Recipes" is a compendium of banana menus created and tested by the Banana Export Industry Foundation. The book features banana soups, entrees, vegetables and desserts.

"Filipino Family Cookbook," edited by Eva Villanueva and Eunice Poethig, is an 87-page set of over a hundred healthy recipes—soups, casseroles and noodles, vegetables, salads, pickles and relishes, beverages, sandwiches, pies, cakes and cookies, Filipino sweets, fruits and molded desserts. It also contains teenage specialties, special diets for the sick, play materials for children and infant food.

The books are available at National Bookstore, Goodwill Bookstore and Powerbooks outlets.

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Chicken makes a comeback on the menu

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

CHICKEN as an ingredient is getting to be popular again because it is believed to be healthier than red meat. It is prized for its versatility and with the way it adapts and blends with other ingredients. It is also moderately priced, which makes it affordable and popular among budget-conscious housewives.

Here we offer different chicken recipes—from the simple to the exotic—that will surely delight your family and friends. Some of these recipes classically call for beef or pork but chicken is highly recommended as the healthier alternative. From my kitchen to yours...

Fried Rice with Ground Chicken

¼ c corn oil
1 tbsp pounded garlic
¾ c chopped onions
½ c minced carrots
500 g ground chicken or 2 c chopped chicken meat
¼ c dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked until plump and chopped (2-3 pc)
4 c cooked rice
5 tbsp soy sauce
1 egg, beaten
¾ tsp peppermill-ground black pepper
½ c chopped leeks/spring onions

Heat the oil in a wok. Add the garlic and sauté until the garlic begins to color. Add the onions and the carrots and continue to sauté until the onions are transparent. Add the chicken and cook until done, stirring from time to time.

Stir in the mushrooms and the rice and blend well. Pour in the beaten egg, soy sauce, black pepper and chopped leeks. Mix well to even out the distribution of the soy sauce and cook only until the leeks begin to wilt. Serve while hot.

Chicken Siomai

½ kg ground chicken
½ c chopped leeks or spring onions
1 tbsp rice wine
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp minced ginger
1 tsp white sugar
1½ tsp sesame oil
1 tsp cornstarch
1 tsp fine salt
1½ tsp ground white pepper
1 sachet chicken powder
½ c finely chopped canned bamboo shoots, canned water chestnuts or *singkamas*
2 pc shiitake mushrooms, soaked in warm water to soften and chopped finely (¼ c)
¾ c pure glutinous rice (*malagkit*) soaked in warm water for at least an hour
Dipping sauce:
Soy sauce with *calamansi* juice

Combine the ingredients for the *siomai* in the order given above excluding the rice. Mix well with your hands. Form into 1-inch balls and roll in rice.

Arrange the rice balls in a steamer and steam for 30 minutes. Serve with soy sauce mixed with *calamansi* juice to taste.

Oriental Chicken Vegetable Medley

Seasoning sauce:
¾ c water
1 tbsp cornstarch
1 tbsp rice wine/cooking sherry
3 tbsp oyster sauce
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp sesame oil
coarsely ground black pepper to taste
¼ c corn oil
1 tbsp ginger cut into thin strips
1 tbsp well pounded garlic
½ c sliced onions
1 head cauliflower, separated into flowerets
6 pc chicken thighs, deboned and cut into strips
1 c carrots cut into strips
8 pcs Baguio *pechay*, cut into 8 pieces, separate leaves from stalks
1½ c sweet pea pods (*chicharo*), strings removed
1 c canned water chestnuts, sliced into rounds
3 pc dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked, washed and cut into strips

Combine the ingredients for the seasoning sauce and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large wok. As soon as the oil is hot enough, sauté the ginger until fragrant. Quickly stir in the garlic and the onions. Continue to sauté until the onions are wilted. Pour in the cauliflower and sauté for a few minutes until the cauliflower becomes glossy. Add the chicken strips and continue to cook, stirring continuously until the chicken strips turn white. Add the carrots and the *pechay* stalks. Sauté until the *pechay* becomes somewhat transparent. Add the rest of the vegetables and mix well. As soon as the vegetables begin to wilt, pour in the prepared seasoning sauce. Keep on mixing until the sauce thickens up a bit.

As an added treat this may be served on a bed of deep-fried *bihon* noodles.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking classes at Dorothy's Cooking School at 48 Third St., New Manila, QC. Call 721-7735.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Cereal with milk and sliced bananas Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Vienna sausage Coffee or hot chocolate	Clear soup Oriental Chicken Vegetable Medley *Pandan* rice Ripe mangoes	Beef *sinigang* with *gabi* and *kangkong* Salted eggs and tomato Salad with *wansoy* Rice Fruit gelatin
TUESDAY	Ham and cheese omelet Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Coffee, hot chocolate, milk or fruit juice	*Pancit canton guisado* Pork steak with onion rings Melon shake	Hainanese chicken rice Chilled wedges of watermelon
WEDNESDAY	*Champorado* Toasted *dilis* Coffee or fruit juice Papaya	Sweet and sour chicken *Pandan* rice Gelatin	*Pesang isda* with cabbage and potatoes Rice Fresh fruit platter
THURSDAY	Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Pan-grilled Spam Coffee, Hot chocolate, Milk or Fruit juice	Chicken arroz caldo *Tokwa't baboy* *Saba con hielo*	Pot roast with gravy Boiled Japanese corn Mashed potatoes Canned fruit cocktail with crushed ice
FRIDAY	Oatmeal with milk Toasted *pan de sal* Butter and fruit jam Coffee or fruit juice	Steamed *maya maya* with garlic mayonnaise Sautéed Chinese *kangkong* with oyster sauce Rice *Buko* sherbet	Instant crab and corn soup Fried rice with ground chicken Breaded squid rings with dipping sauce Mango and *sago* salad
SATURDAY	Garlic rice Pork *adobo* Fried egg sunny side up Coffee or fruit juice	Baked chicken spaghetti Garlic bread Tossed green salad Blueberry cheesecake	Tossed green salad Beef salpicado with button mushrooms and toasted garlic Rice Fresh fruit platter
SUNDAY	French toast with orange Honey and butter Crispy honeycured bacon Coffee, milk or hot chocolate Papaya with calamansi	Chicken *kare-kare* Sautéed *bagoong* Rice *Mais con hielo* with cornflakes	Chicken *siomai* Steamed fish restaurant style Rice Almond jelly

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

Culinary courses for messmen, stewards and beginners

MESSMEN, stewards and budding culinary experts now have a chance to acquire a certificate in the art of cooking. Enroll at Maya Kitchen's Cooking I (Basic) for Messmen, Stewards and Beginners on May 27-30, 1:30-5 p.m.

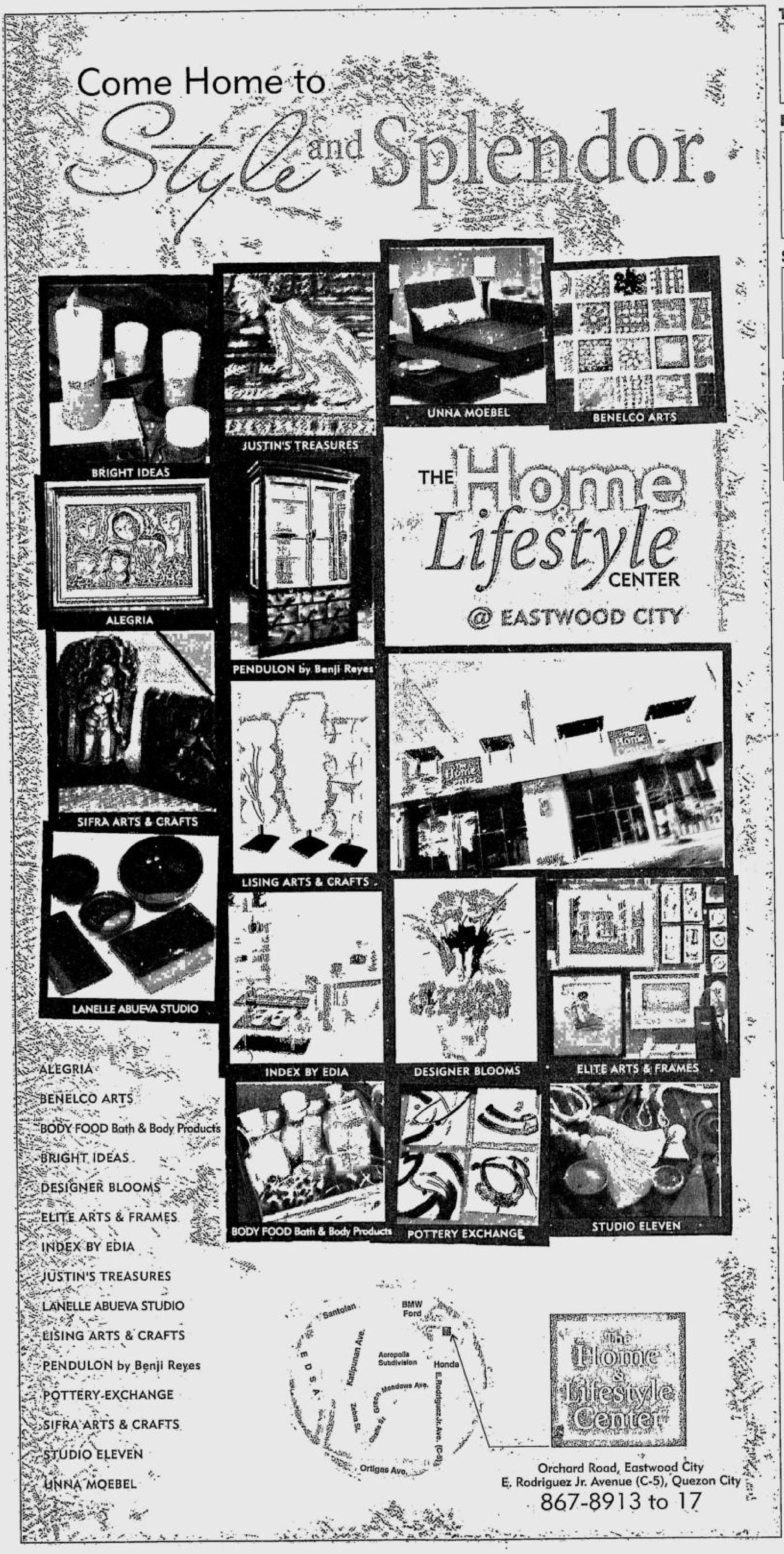
These certificate courses with hands-on for adults will teach participants the rudiments of cooking like basic food preparation, cooking methods for vegetables, pasta, meats and poultry dishes, techniques of de-boning chicken and fish, basic garnishing, actual preparations of popular Filipino and Oriental dishes.

For career cooks, there's Cooking II (Comprehensive Cooking) for Career Cooks on May 27-30, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The course includes standard techniques of preparing basic stocks, soups and sauces applicable to 1,001 recipes, salads and dressing, main dishes, potato cookery, pasta and rice, techniques of deboning and filleting fish and chicken, use of herbs and spices to cooking, basic garnish for plate and platter presentation.

Participants will be treated on a free lunch in any of the scheduled dates.

For Special Courses for Adults, Maya Kitchen offers Kakanin course on May 24, 1:30-5 p.m. Recipes include Puto, Cuchinta, Cassava Bibingka, Pichi Pichi and Maja Blanca. Maya Bibingka and Tamales will also be taught as special bonus.

Visit Maya Kitchen Tuesday to Friday at the 8/F Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 892-1185/5011 local 108, or e-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph.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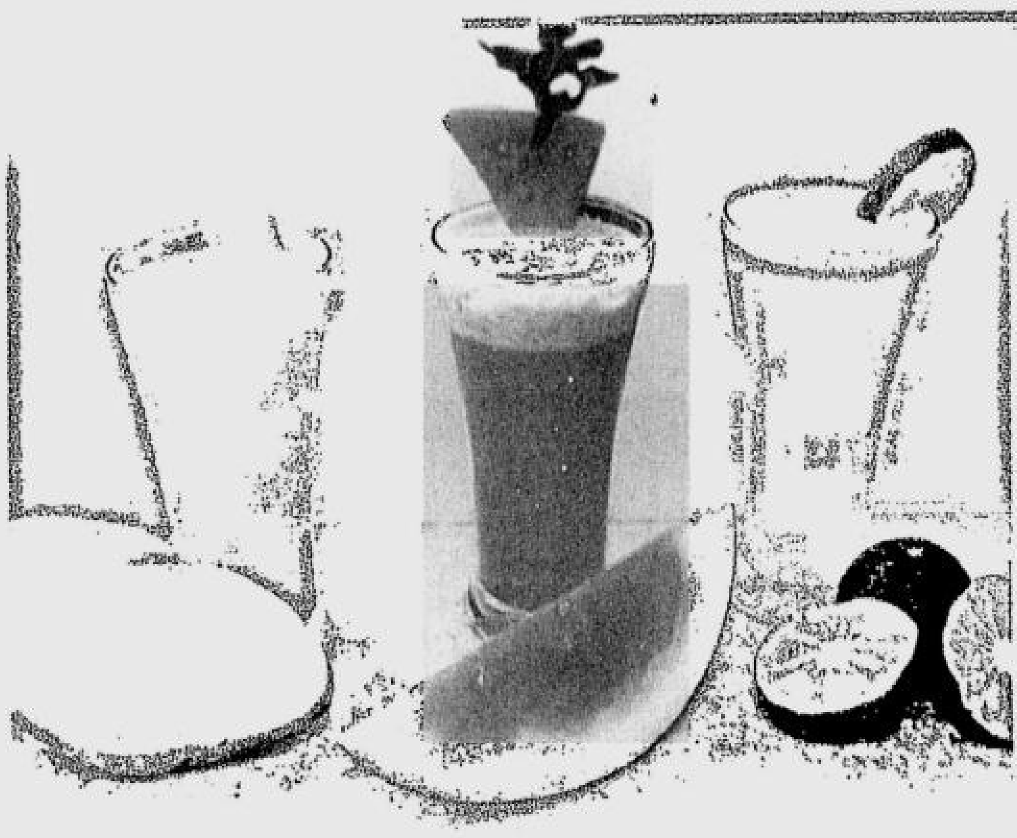

Shake off the heat with fruity concoctions

Fruit shakes are easy to prepare and even more refreshing than sodas

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Johnny Villena

WHAT'S summer without fresh fruit shakes?

There's nothing as wondrously refreshing and uplifting to beat the stifling heat on a hot summer's day than a lip-smacking fruit shake.

This is probably the best time to indulge in fruit shakes with many tropical fruits at their cheapest and most plentiful. *Dalandan* sells for only P35 per kilo; mangoes, P30 per kilo; seedless watermelon, P75-150 each depending on the size.

Fruit shakes made at home are fresher and purer in flavor than any ready-made shake sold commercially.

It takes just a few minutes to make fruit shakes at home. French Baker's Johnlu Koa presents three kinds of sweet, icy drinks to keep us cool during the warm-weather. The fruits shakes' flavors are enhanced by syrup.

"Simple syrup is a little more than a mixture of sugar and water. It's a sweetening ingredient that brings out the flavor of the fruit drink," Koa says. Simple syrup is used to sweeten a variety of beverages. It can be stored indefinitely in a refrigerator to be used when a recipe calls for simple sugar or syrup.

SHAKE/ D2

STEP BY STEP

TO make simple syrup, combine water and sugar in a saucepan. Don't stir; cover and bring to a boil.

2

TURN off the heat as soon as it boils. Cool. Transfer to a liquid bottle or dispenser to make it easier to pour. Set aside.

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April Marcial-Stewart
Businesswoman

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Classes are from 2-5 PM at the Julius Maggi Kitchen, Ground Floor, Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Call 726-9232 or 726-1016 for reservations.

Invite a friend and bring labels of NIDO 1+, 3+, 6+ and Full Cream, MAGGI Spaghetti, MAGGI Milky Noodle Soup, and NESTLÉ Chocolate Milk Drink for a chance to win special prizes in the Nestlé Bring a Friend, Lucky Labels, and Buy & Win promos. Ask for details when you make your reservations.

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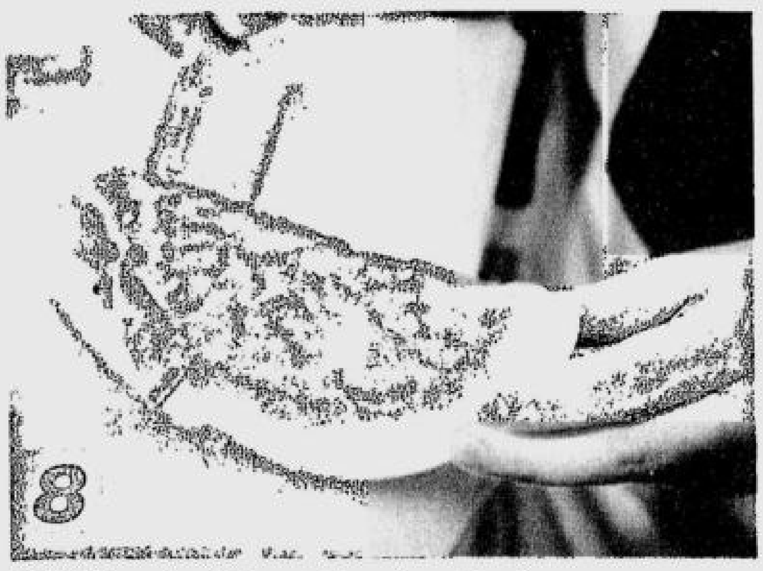
ADD the simple syrup.

ADD ice and blend thoroughly until smooth and thick.



FOR Watermelon Shake, cut the watermelon slices.

Shake off the heat with fruity concoctions

From page D1

The sweetness (or density) is a matter of preference. Thin and medium syrup is best for cocktails, while thicker syrup is used for sundaes, fountain drinks and desserts.

"If you're a health-buff, making fresh fruits shakes is also a fun and easy way to get more vitamins and minerals into your diet," Koa adds.

Before shake is served, Koa suggests garnishing each drink with a thinly sliced round of *dalandan* or a quarter slice of watermelon and a sprig of mint in the tip of the glass.

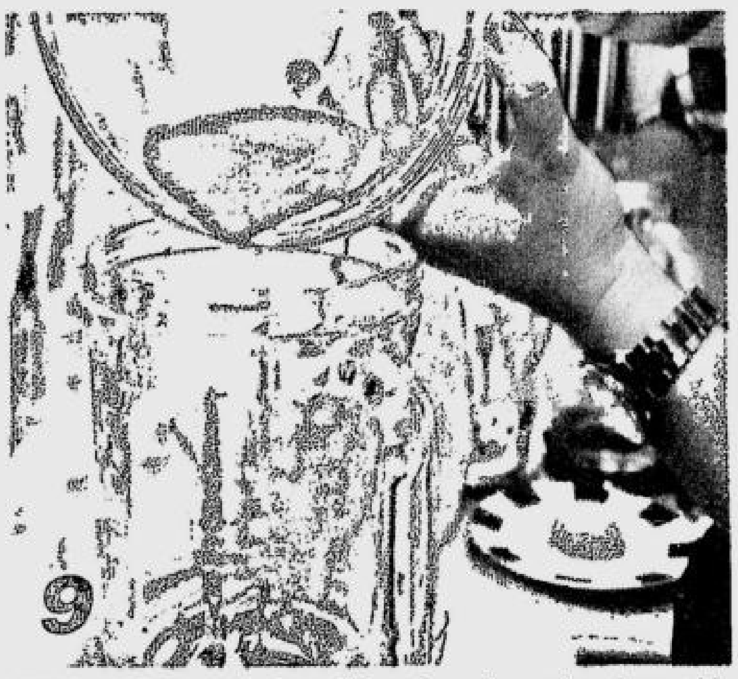
With these fresh fruit shakes, you can cool down in no time and forget about the heat.

For simple syrup:
2 ½ c (or 500 g) water
2 1/8 c (or 400 g) sugar
Dalandan Shake:
3 pcs *dalandan* fruit
½ c simple syrup
1 c ice
Watermelon Shake:
2 slices seedless watermelon
½ c simple syrup
1 c ice
Mango Shake:
1 mango halved
½ c simple syrup
1 c ice

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

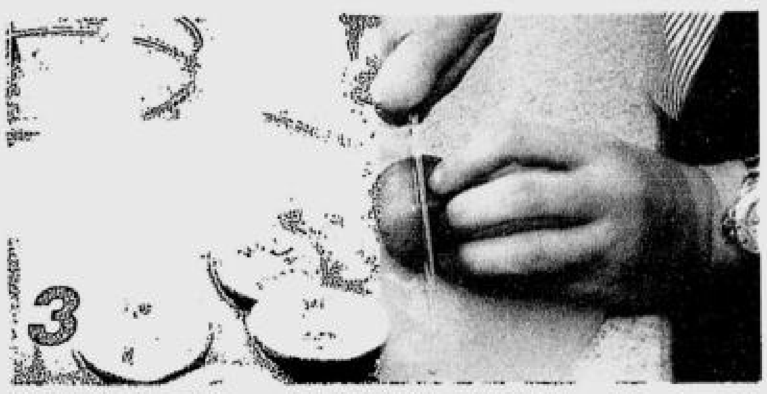
IN a blender, pour the *dalandan* extract.

WATERMELON Shake

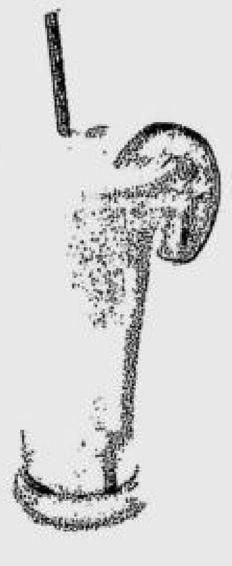


ADD ice and process again until the mixture is evenly and smoothly pureed.

PLACE one half at a time on the squeezer and squeeze the juice into a bowl.



FOR Dalandan Shake, cut each *dalandan* in half.



DALANDAN Shake

MANGO Shake

TRANSFER fruit shake to a nice tall glass. Mangoes, papaya, strawberries may also be used and prepared in the same way as the watermelon.

POUR the simple syrup into a blender and add the watermelon. Blend thoroughly.

Coffee trade show at the mall

SOMETHING'S brewing at Megatrade Hall 3 of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City on July 4-6—The Coffee, Tea and Specialty Beverage Trade Show.

As the newest and most promising trade show for coffee, tea and specialty beverage manufacturers, distributors, shop owners and even patrons, the event will showcase a wide array of biscotti and baked goods, home and commercial brewing equipment, beverage mixes, confections, dispenser bins and display cases, coffee-table books, home and commercial espresso machines, mugs, coffee and tea pots.

Highlighting the trade show is the 1st Philippine Barista Competition—a showmanship of espresso, cappuccino and signature coffee mix preparation skills among the best baristas in the country today with Torani as event presenter.

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- Butchi

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- Mango Sago
- Butchi

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Per DTI NCR permit No. AI-228 Series 2003

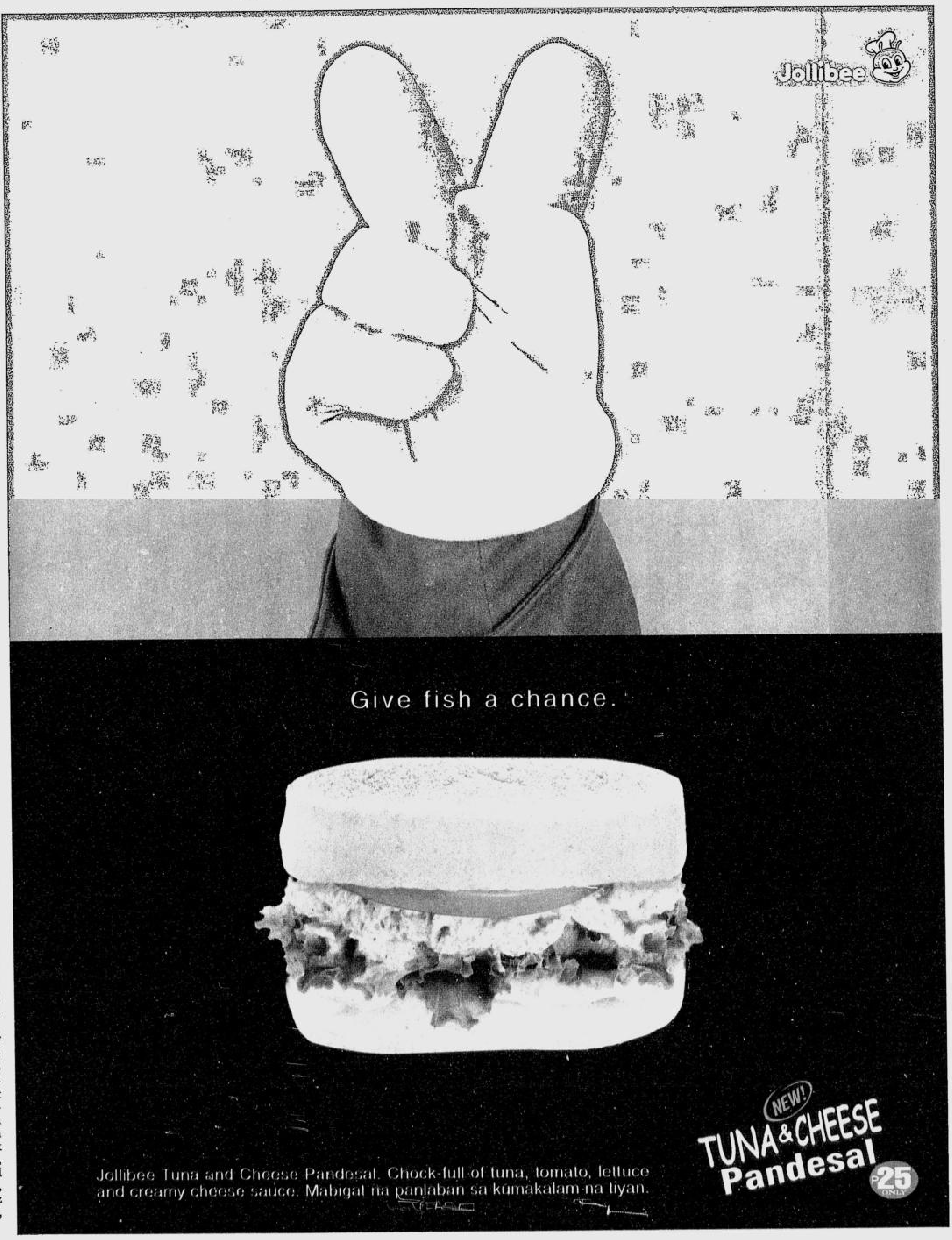
FOODSPHERE Inc., makers of CDO Hams, Karne Norte and Bibbo! Hotdog, recently introduced Sea Quest Bangus in cans.
Sea Quest packs prime *bangus* cuts in vegetable oil available in Spanish style or with tausi.

Grocery promo for families

WIN P50,000 and P10,000 worth of groceries for the whole family in UCare 1-2-3's Grocery Race promo. A total of 10 lucky families will be drawn from GMA, Luzon and Visayas and will compete for the grand grocery race on May 30.

Televised live at "Eat Bulaga," this race is a showcase of skill, speed and family spirit. Each family contestant will be given a list of grocery items, which they will have to find as fast as they can and race to the finish line. Five winning families will take home P50,000 each plus P10,000 worth of premium grocery items. On the other hand, non-winning families will still get the P10,000 worth of grocery items as consolation prize.

To join, simply collect box top labels or tin foil of any UCare 1-2-3 pack sizes 180g, 400g and 800g. Enclose it in an envelope together with a piece of paper bearing your name, address, names of two family members and signature. Drop your entries in designated drop boxes at supermarkets in Luzon and Visayas. You may also send them to New Zealand Milk (Philippines) Inc., Unit 303 Central Business Park, Amana Rodriguez Avenue, Manggahan, Pasig City.



Jollibee Tuna and Cheese Pandesal. Chock-full of tuna, tomato, lettuce and creamy cheese sauce. Mabigat na panlaban sa kumakalam na tiyan.

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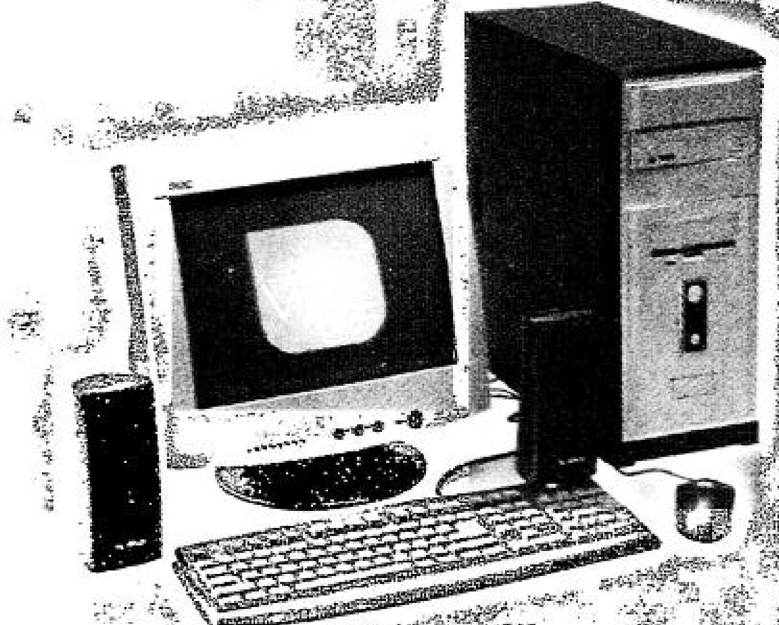

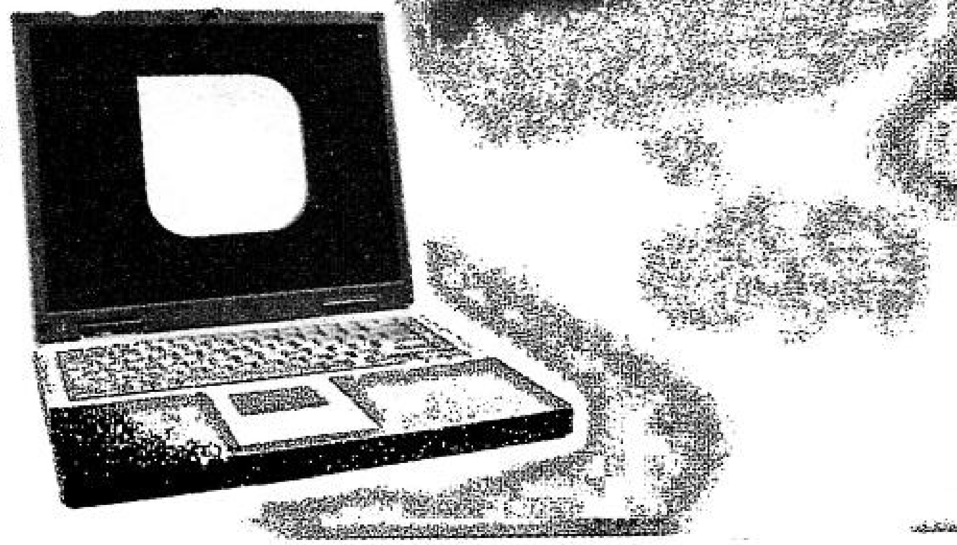

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Per DTI-NCR permit No. 1782 Series of 2003.

Blueberry muffin, risotto and 'kare-kare'—for the love of mom

MY palate has yet to encounter food that tastes better than my mother's. Mom's food has nourished me since I was a child.

It's Mom's *bacalao* that makes me feel light and a bit guilty on Good Friday. Her succulent roast pork with whole garlic mushroom gravy, mashed potatoes and corn makes family get-togethers something to look forward to. And her *afritada* with fresh roasted peppers in olive oil, pan-fried *adobo*, *kare-kare* and *binagoongan* always make me scream for more.

Today, Mom, I wish you a belated Happy Mother's Day. All that I am is because of you. Your dedication and perseverance as wife, mother and public servant have made all the difference in my life.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

I thank you, Mom, for your example and for your love that remains unconditional. And I thank God for the gift of you in my life. Time and again I've been asked what makes me proud. I am proudest because I am my parents' daughter! I love you, Mom!

As a tribute to mothers, Kitchen Rescue compiles some of my best recipes for blueberry muffin, *kare-kare* and risotto. Prepare these recipes with much love, because cooking is like loving; it involves emotion and passion, understanding and devotion.

I want to know if there are fresh or frozen blueberries available locally. I made some muffins using the canned blueberries. I got this tip from Ms Nora Daza's column a few years ago, and it did not give me the results that I wanted. The muffins did not taste like the muffins I buy from the bakeshops. I also would like to know if I could substitute honey brown sugar for granulated sugar? I bought a muffin recipe book by Le Cordon Bleu and the sugar they

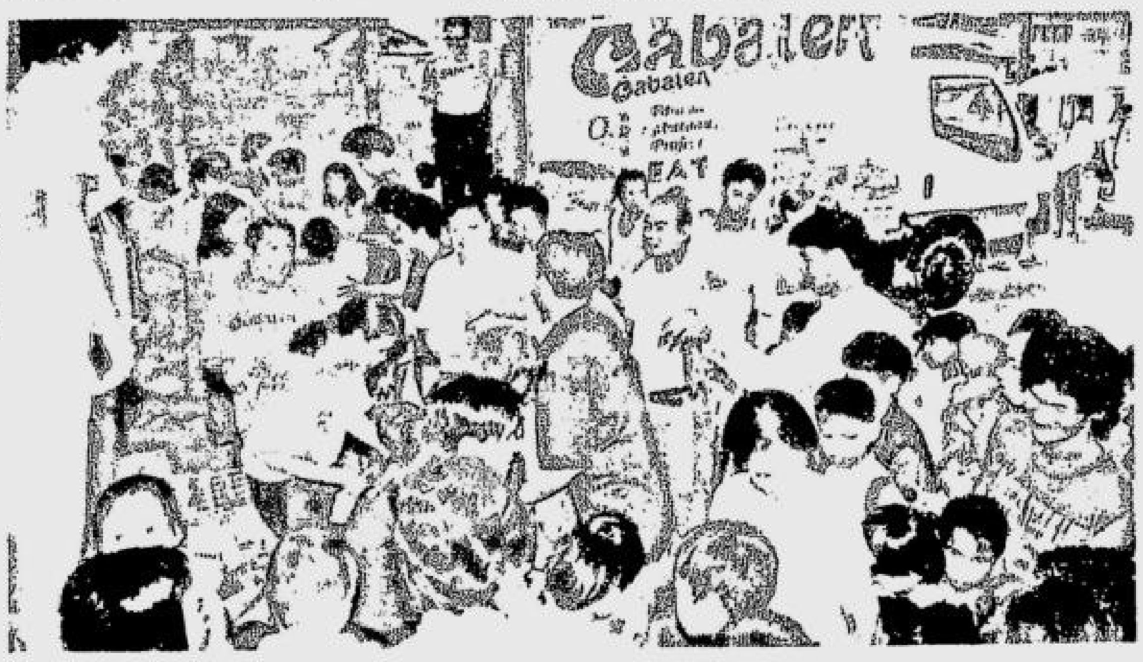
BLUEBERRY/ E3

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Hi-Nutrition TANG
Hi-Nutrition TANG
ORANGE FLAVOR

A mother always knows

There are some things a mother always knows: Kung gaano nila kagusto ang sarap ng orange at kung gaano nila kailangan ang Vitamin C. At 'yan ang dahilan kaya walang katulad ang isang pitcher ng napakasarap na Tang na charged with calcium pa. A mother always knows.



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IAN Tiongson with Cabalen managers and Pampanga officials and councilors Bong Alvaro, Alex Caugiran, Lito Granzon, Alex Indionco, Ares Yabut and Benedict Ochoa

Cabalen's charity work keeps Pampanga's hopes alive

From page E4

life," said Tiongson.

Also present was Cabalen's product and research officer Adji Tiongson. Cabalen branch managers Oscar Nunag, Issa Marañon and Jennifer Montero made sure every child received refreshments.

On the return trip to Manila, as the convoy snaked its way to the places that suffered the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, the Cabalen staff marveled at the tenacity of spirit of the Capampangans.

Businesses seemed to be thriving again. The people were especially warm, hospitable, and there was a sense of optimism and hope that the ravages of lahar and Pinatubo had been finally overcome.

A HAPPY face in the crowd

WALHALLA Pasta

Bonzer items keep guests coming back for more

AT OUTBACK Restaurant, boomerang means bonzer. Leading the pack is the restaurant's Kookaburra Wings with blue cheese dressing.

Then there's King's Canyon Pork, three tender slices of slow-roasted pork loin served with garlic mashed potatoes and fresh veggies. Best enjoyed with Outback's black peppercorn sauce.

Boomerang Steak is a six-ounce slowly roasted sirloin topped with mushroom sauce and served with veggies and garlic mashed potatoes.

Canberra Hamburger Steak comes with peppercorn sauce, garlic mashed potatoes and fresh veggies.

The Walhalla Pasta is another guest favorite. Fettuccine Alfredo is tossed with fresh veggies and topped with grilled chicken.

The top-selling non-steak item on the menu, North Atlantic Salmon is lightly seasoned, grilled to perfection, and served with remoulade sauce and fresh veggies.

Rounding up Outback's "boomerang-certified" dishes is Chocolate Thunder From Down Under, pecan brownie topped with rich vanilla ice cream, hot homemade chocolate sauce, and chocolate shavings.

Visit Outback Restaurant at Glorietta 4, Libis and Alabang Town Center.

KING Canyon's Pork

You're held captive at Cebu airport. A two-hour delay.

Enough time to wander aimlessly through the hallways

and read every newspaper you can lay your hands on.

Is this the most you can make out of idle time?

(They desperately need you to upload your photographs to meet the newspaper deadline in Manila.)

Blueberry muffin, risotto and 'kare-kare'—for the love of mom

From page E1

used in most of the recipes is honey brown sugar.

I baked a butter cake for my aunt's birthday last April and I must say the family loved it. I used a 9"x13" pan for the recipe. I would like to know if I could use loaf pans, what size and how many minutes should the baking take. I want to sell it in small loaves so it would be more affordable.

CANDY R. CABRERA

P.S. I tried your banana bread recipe and the whole family loved it.

Let's get down to business. About blueberries, well, there are fresh ones from Baguio that to me look malnourished, gangrenous and more black than deep blue. They badly stain your fingers; pop in your mouth and the taste is reminiscent of red *champoy*! After having described the local berries to you, I guess it's quite safe for me to say—use them at your own risk! Unless of course you're baking for your enemies!

Whenever I need blueberries, I use fresh French or Australian berries or the frozen ones, all available at Santi's Deli. The canned ones never quite appeal to me; I've tried using them on several occasions. I suggest you use the frozen ones, thawed, for your muffins.

Now, honey brown sugar, this I'm addicted to! It's made by Kilion and available in Rustan's. Brown sugar is a better substitute than white granulated sugar. But then again, the difference is like using granulated instead of caster sugar.

Your butter cake could be baked in smaller pans. Lessen the baking time, though.

Blueberry Muffins

½ c butter, softened at room temperature
1 c plus
4 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
2½ c fresh or thawed frozen blueberries
2 c flour
½ c milk
¼ c + ½ tsp cinnamon

Preheat oven to 375ºF. Grease a muffin tin or line the cups with paper liners. In a mixer, cream the butter until smooth. Add 1 cup of the sugar and mix. Add the eggs, vanilla, baking powder and salt, and mix. Add ½ of the flour, then ½ of the milk, and mix. Repeat with remaining flour and milk. Fold in the blueberries by hand until well mixed. Mix the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar with the cinnamon. Fill the muffin cups ¾ full with the batter. Sprinkle the cinnamon-sugar over the muffins and bake until golden brown and risen, 25-30 minutes.

I am learning how to make risotto. Where can I get arborio rice? What is a good alternative that is easy to buy? Can I also request for a good, simple risotto recipe?

MARGARET

Arborio rice is available in Santi's Deli. There is really no need for substitutes. Arborio is quite readily available and Santi's has six branches! Remember, good food is created from the finest ingredients. So I suggest that early on you learn that "ingredient substitution" should be a last resort!

Risotto

2 tbsp olive oil
4 pc fresh pork sausage, casings removed and crumbled
3 c mixed mushrooms—fresh shiitake, oyster and button (stemmed and diced)
1 tsp chopped fresh thyme
1 tsp chopped fresh oregano
1½ c white wine
6 c chicken stock
½ c butter
1 large onion, chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 c arborio rice
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp cream
1 c freshly grated parmigiano

Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage and sauté until beginning to brown, about 3 minutes. Add all mushrooms, thyme and oregano, and sauté until mushrooms are tender. Add ½ cup wine; boil until almost absorbed. Set aside.

Simmer stock, remove from heat and cover to keep hot. Melt butter in a saucepan. Add onion and garlic and sauté until onion is translucent. Add rice. Stir. Add remaining 1 cup white wine, simmer until absorbed. Add 1 cup hot stock; simmer until almost absorbed, stirring often. Continue to cook until rice is just tender and mixture is creamy, adding more stock by cupfuls, stirring often and allowing most stock to be absorbed before adding more. Stir in sausage mixture. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the remaining 2 tbsp butter and cream. Top with freshly grated parmesan cheese.

I have been based in Canada since last year. My aunt and grandma are bugging me to cook *kare-kare*, but I don't have the best recipe. I hope you can satisfy their craving.

PRINCESS

The secret to good *kare-kare* is not just the stew, but the *bagoong*. It makes all the difference. I am providing you a delicious *bagoong alamang* recipe that will go excellently with the well-loved Pinoy peanut stew.

Kare-kare

3 kg oxtail, cleaned and cut
1 kg beef shank (optional)
5 tbsp peanut oil
5 cloves garlic, crushed
1 medium size onion, sliced
Water from ¼ c *achuete*, soaked (I soak my *achuete* seeds in hot water)
1 banana heart, sliced
2 bundles Chinese long bean (*sitaw*), cut into 2"pieces
4 eggplants, cut into ½" slices
1 bundle squash flowers
1/3 c rice, toasted brown in a pan and ground fine
½ c peanut butter (creamy type, unless of course you're patient enough to roast peanuts and pound them to a fine paste)
Salt and pepper, to taste

Boil ox tail once and discard water. Boil again until tender. Boil the beef shank separately until tender. Sauté garlic and onion in peanut oil. Add *achuete* water and peanut butter. Add meat and the remaining stock. Thicken with toasted rice powder. Add the vegetables, banana hearts going first. Season with salt, pepper.

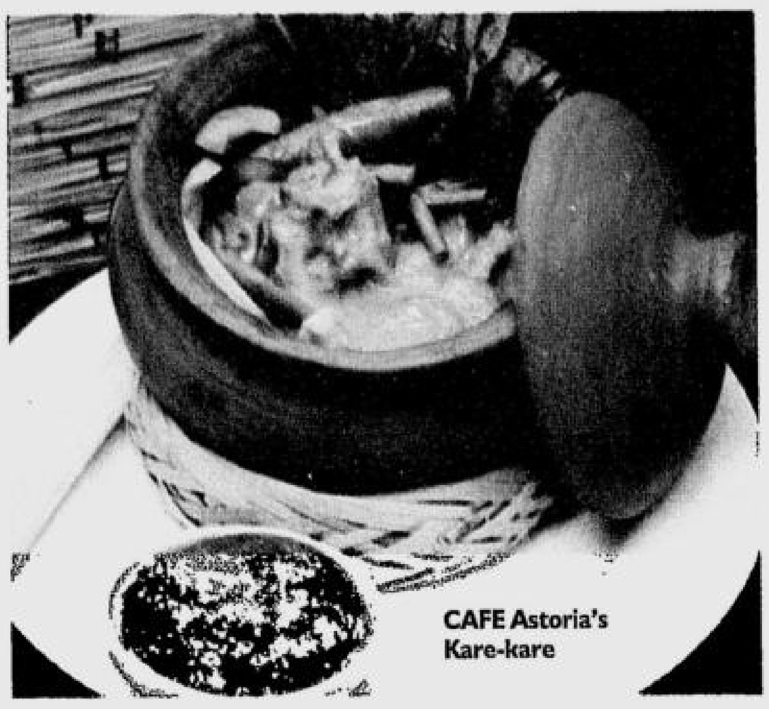
Bagoong Alamang

1/3 c olive or vegetable oil
½ c garlic
½ c shallots, sliced
1 c fresh salted *alamang*
1/3 c water
1/3 c brown sugar +/- (depending on the saltiness of the *alamang*)
1-2 pc bird's eye chilies (*labuyo*), sliced

In a saucepan, heat up olive oil and slightly brown garlic. Add shallots, *alamang*, water, brown sugar and chilies. Let simmer until thick.

For my cooking class schedule, turn to page C2.

For questions, comments and suggestions, e-mail reggie1@skyinet.net



CAFE Astoria's Kare-kare

12:00 noon.

Perfect time to join her shopping for those shoes she absolutely must have.

You know it could take a while for her to choose.

Is this how you spend your idle time?

(While she tries them all on, why not go online and see if the Los Angeles Lakers can make it beyond the NBA semi-finals?)

PASALUBONG for the family

CABALEN GM Ian Tiongson (right) and product research officer Adji Tiongson (left) lead the annual gift-giving in Pampanga.

Cabalen's charity work keeps Pampanga's hopes alive

THE CABALEN convoy knew it was not an ordinary day. Making its way past golden ricefields ready for harvest, the staff of the Cabalen chain of restaurants hardly noticed the devastation of Pampanga by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption 10 years ago.

Capampangans, or *cabalen*, as they are known, struggled mightily a decade back to keep nature's wrath from obliterating their beloved land. Whole towns were engulfed, precious crops destroyed, people were killed, and families rendered homeless.

It was during those distressing times in Pampanga that Maritel O. Nievera, president and CEO of Cabalen, started her Cabalen Para sa Kabataan program.

Setting aside a portion of its restaurant sales, Cabalen donated relief items such as clothes, health items, medicines, and toys to children, more specifically, to the victims of lahar.

Now on its fifth year running, Cabalen Para sa Kabataan has benefited countless children in the depressed areas of the province.

Assisting the relief campaign this year were former Angeles City Mayor Ed Pamintuan and his wife Minang, both long-time supporters of Cabalen Para sa Kabataan.

Also there to assist were Benedict Ochoa and Councilors Bong Alvaro, Alex Caugiran, Lito Granzon, Alex Indionco and Ares Yabut.

This year's donations were given to the children of Sitio Pader and Sitio Nicaragua of Barangay Pulung Maragul.

Kagawads Jojo Dimapilis and Conrado Mendoza of Brgy. Pulung Maragul helped in the gift-giving.

Cabalen was led by its general manager, Ian N. Tiongson, who reiterated the company's resolve to help Pampanga as an expression of gratitude to those who had patronized Cabalen.

"In being true to Cabalen's mission and vision, we will continue year in and year out to give as part of the company's commitment to the community (and the) less privileged in

CABALEN/ E2

From now on,
there's no need to rush
to your fastfood outlet
in the morning just to
enjoy hash brown.

Introducing...

FRENCHIES®
Hash Brown
The cook-it yourself hash brown

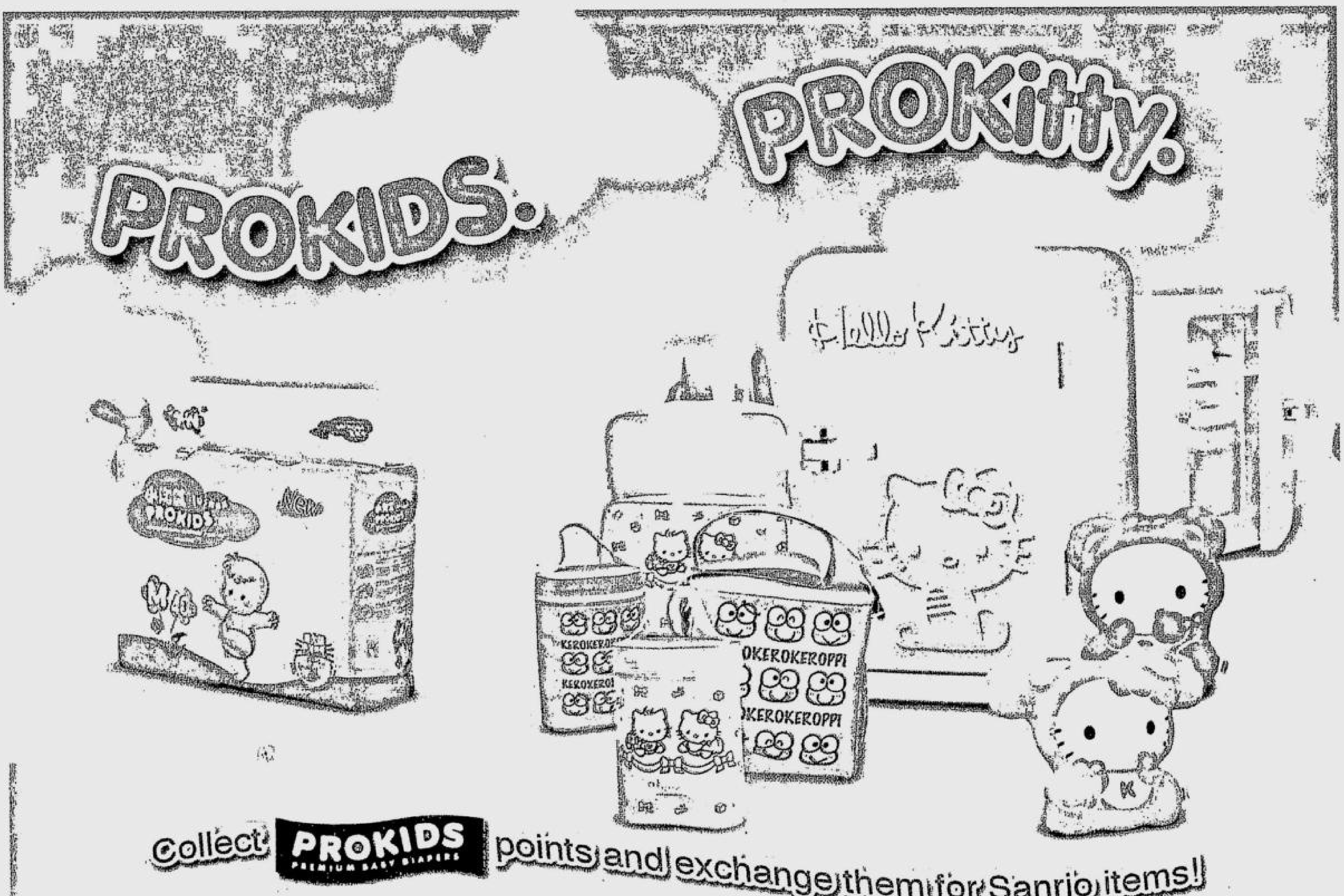
If you want hash brown for breakfast, you don't have to get up real early to beat the 10:00 o'clock cut-off time for the morning meal in fastfood restaurant.

Just buy *FRENCHIES* hash brown and have six appetizing, delicious hash brown patties in your own homes, enjoy it during breakfast, lunch, dinner or snack time.

Preparing it is so easy, just fry it and your favorite hash brown is now ready to be enjoyed.

So when you want hash brown get *FRENCHIES* Hash Brown.
Because you should have it
when you want it!!

FRENCHIES
Hash Brown



Collect PROKIDS PREMIUM BABY DIAPERS points and exchange them for Sanrio items!

1. Collect Prokids Premium Baby Diaper points and present them with the required cash outlay at the following Unitrade offices, Sub-distributors and participating supermarkets and Gift Gate outlets:

UNITRADE MERCHANDISE, INC. OFFICES:

Manila Office
LAM-AN CENTER, #72 2nd St., Bet. 8th and 9th Ave.,
Grace Park, Kalookan City

Cebu Office
Mandaue North Central M.L. Quezon Ave.,
Cabangkalan, Mandaue, Cebu City

Gift Gate and Sanrio Surprise Stores: Gift Gate, Glorietta 2 Ayala Center • Gift Gate Alabang Town Center • Gift Gate Harrison Plaza • Gift Gate SM Megamall B

Redemption Booths in Supermarkets: Hi-Top Supermarket, QC • Chons, Olongapo • Magic Star, Tarlac City • Airland, Angeles City • Nacional Supermarket, San Fernando, La Union • Sunshine Supermarket, Baguio • Citimart (Caedo) Batangas City • Metro Ayala Gaisano Cebu • Gaisano Mall Davao

Sub-Distributors: LU BEAUTY HAUS - Dalumpenas, Oeste, San Fernando City, La Union • ROSCOM & COMPANY- Door 4 MSC Bldg., Valeria Ext. St., Iloilo City • TRIPLE 8 ENTERPRISES - 673 Ante Subd., Washington Drive, Legaspi City • GOLDEN CENTURY MKTG. - 10 R. F. Abejuela St., Cagayan de Oro City • CCT VENTURE - 6501 Pawing Palo, Tacloban City • MINGATE CORPORATION - JTT Bldg. Atilano Loop, Veteran's Ave. Ext., Zamboanga City • MKC c/o Popong's Suerte Mart 482-486 A. Consunji St., San Fernando, Pampanga • DAVAO ASIAN DISTRIBUTOR, INC. - SPK Compound, Warehouse, 3, KM 7, Lanang, 8000 Davao City • GREEN TAG CORPORATION - PACE Building 3rd Lacson St., Bacolod City

2. **Unitrade Office/Sub-Distributor's Redemption Schedule:** Everyday except Sunday starting April 1 - August 14, 2003. **Gift Gate Stores and Supermarkets Redemption Schedule:** Every Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays starting April 4 - August 10, 2003
3. Prizes with their corresponding required Prokids Premium Baby Diaper label points and additional cash requirements:

ITEMS	Points + Php Added
Mobicool Mini Refrigerator	28 points + Php 800.00
Hello Kitty Diecut Pillow	10 points + Php 100.00
Dear Daniel Diecut Pillow	10 points + Php 100.00
Hello Kitty Babies Backpack	8 points + Php 200.00
Kerokerokeroppi Shoulder Bag	8 points + Php 200.00
Hello Kitty Babies Bottle Bag	4 points + Php 80.00
Kerokerokeroppi Bottle Bag	4 points + Php 80.00

4. Corresponding points per packaging are as follows: Mini pack/4's = 1/4 pt. • Big pack = 1pt. • Value pack = 2 pts.
5. Consumer may join as many times as they want.
6. Prizes may not be converted to CASH.
7. Promo period is from April 1 to August 14, 2003.

PROKIDS PREMIUM BABY DIAPERS
SANRIO SWAP 2

For more information, visit our website at www.evel.com.ph
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0404 Series of 2003

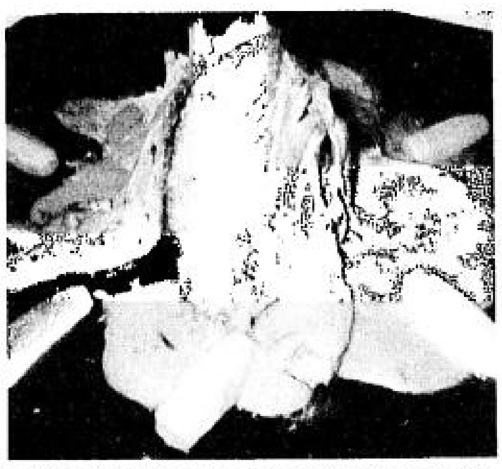
Under sublicense from Gift Gate, Inc., San Juan, Metro Manila. Gift Gate, Inc. is the license in the Philippines of Sanrio Co., Ltd, Tokyo, Japan © 1976, 1988, 1999, 2003 Sanrio Co., Ltd.

Month-long festival features prime Australian lamb

DINING OUT

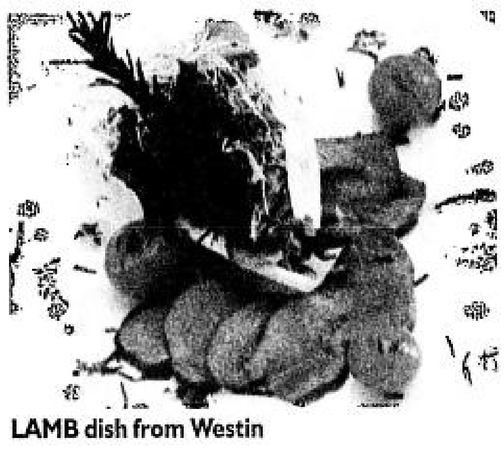
ILUSTRADO Restaurant, in cooperation with Australian Livestock, presents the month-long lamb festival "Oooh-La-Lamb." Ilustrado is open for lunch and dinner, Monday to Saturday; closed for dinner on Sundays. It is located on Calle Real del Palacio Street, Intramuros. Call 527-2345/3675 or 301-0133.

INTERCONTINENTAL Manila's Prince Albert Rotisserie presents asparagus delights until May 24. It also holds the Australian Lamb Festival until May 31. Featured are Smoked Roasted Australian Rack of Lamb with Spring Vegetables in Jus, Australian Lamb Loin Coated with Herbs served with Eggplant Caviar Cake, Braised Australian Lamb Shank scented with Peanut served with Vegetable Couscous and Shrimp Mint Sauce and Australian Lamb Shank Aspic scented with Herbs and Vegetables. Call 815-9711 local 262.



ILUSTRADO'S Herbed Roast Lamb, bone-in roasted leg of lamb rubbed with fresh herbs served with brown sauce and mint jelly

THE WESTIN Philippine Plaza features lamb dishes such as Rosemary Smoked Lamb Fillet Timbale with Chargrilled Vegetables, Arugula Leaves and a Trio of Flavored Oils; Lamb and Pistachio Terrine Wrapped in Bacon with Balsamic Syrup and Mango; Braised Lamb Shank with Goat Cheese, Crushed Potatoes and Thyme Flavored Broth; Szechuan Peppercorn and Sesame Crusted Lamb Cutlets with Carrot and Ginger Galeffe, Honey and Soya Reduction Splash; and Pyramid Carved Lamb Fillet and Zucchini Minted Couscous and Tahina Jus. Call 551-5555 local 1529 or 1934.



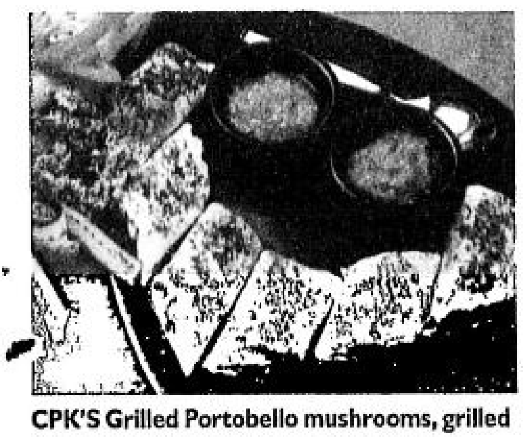
LAMB dish from Westin

SUPER BOWL of China now delivers to your homes, offices and social and business gatherings. Delivery services are available in the following areas: Quezon City (Camp Aguinaldo/Camp Crame; White Plains, Green Meadows, Cubao-Aurora Blvd., Project 4; Libis); Pasig (Valle Verde, Ortigas Center, Kapitolyo); Mandaluyong and San Juan (Mandaluyong, Wack Wack, Greenhills); Makati (Makati business district, all Makati villages, Guadalupe, The Fort); Manila (Taft Avenue up to Zobel Roxas Ave.) and Pasay (Villamor). Delivery is from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. for a minimum purchase of P250. A 10 percent delivery charge will be added to the final bill. Call 737-8888.

HUA LAN Chinese Restaurant offers an eat-all-you-can Roast Duck buffet for only P299/adult, P180/child below 4 ft. The buffet is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6:30-9:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday only. Call 895-1681 or 896-7828.

CALIFORNIA Pizza Kitchen offers Cremini, Shiitake, Portobello and white mushrooms baked with Mozzarella cheese. There's also Carne Asada pizza with grilled steak, fire-toasted mild chilies, cilantro pesto, Monterey Jack and Mozzarella cheeses served with tomato salsa. Its pasta includes Spicy Shrimp and Scallop Marinara with spicy Marinara sauce and Marsala Marinara. There are Focaccia sandwiches, too. CPK branches are located at Tomas Morato, Shangri-La Mall, Glorietta 3 Makati and Alabang Town Center.

CAFÉ All Day at Tequila Joe's El Pueblo offers Country Fried Chicken Steak, Huevos Rancheros, Benedict Joe's, Country Ham Eggstravaganza, Sloppy Joe's.



CPK'S Grilled Portobello mushrooms, grilled Japanese eggplant, sun-dried tomatoes, caramelized onions, fontina, mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses served with sun-dried tomato marinara

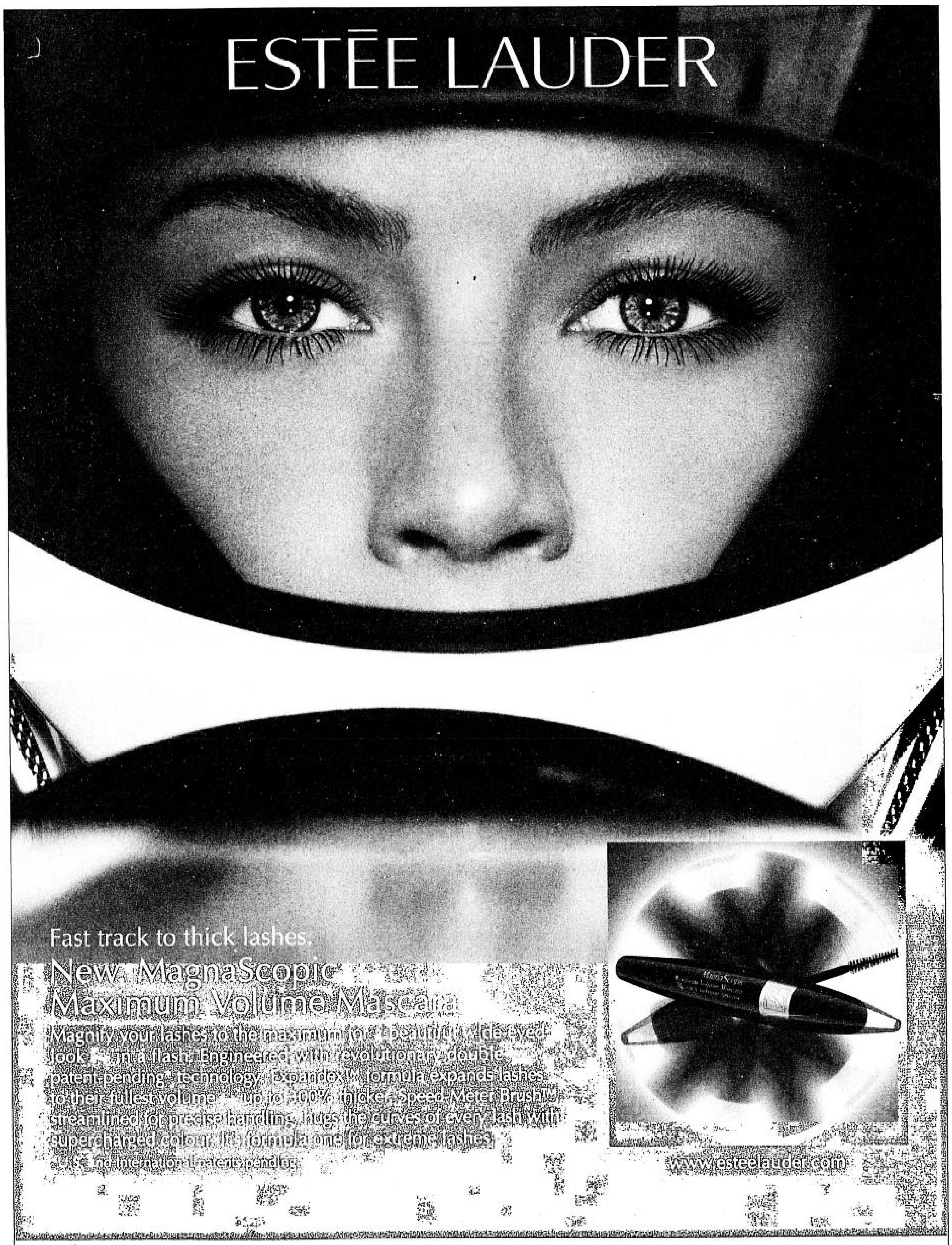
TEQUILA Joe's offers lunch meals for as low as P199 with Lipton Ice Tea. These include Salpicao Rice, Oriental Chicken Rice, Fire-grilled BLT, Big Joe Burger, Salad and Shrimp, Mandarin Salad, 2 Fry Chicken and Grilled Ribs. Tequila Joe's also presents a selection of appetizers. There's also the Seafood Platter, Appetizer Platter, and pizzas. TJ's branches are located at El Pueblo in Ortigas Center, Glorietta 4 Makati, Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center in Cebu, Tomas Morato and Robinsons Place Malate.

Branches are at El Pueblo in Ortigas Center, Glorietta 4 Makati, Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center in Cebu, Tomas Morato and Robinsons Place Malate.

EDSA Shangri-La Manila's Bakeshop offers cakes such as black and white forest, caramel mousse with spiced pears, crunchy maple cheesecake, hazelnut gianduja dome, and coffee mascarpone. Its new muffins are poppy seed and lemon, apple and cinnamon, oatmeal and raisin,

MONTH-LONG/ F4

INTERCON'S Braised Australian Lamb Shank scented with peanut and served with vegetable couscous and shrimp mint sauce



Fast track to thick lashes.

New MagnaScopic Maximum Volume Mascara

Magnify your lashes to the maximum for a beautiful wide-eyed look — in a flash. Engineered with revolutionary double patent-pending* technology. Expandex™ formula expands lashes to their fullest volume — up to 300% thicker. Speed-Meter Brush™ streamlined for precise handling, hugs the curves of every lash with supercharged colour. It's formula one for extreme lashes.

*U.S. and International patents pending.

www.esteelauder.com

A Gift For You

Receive a travel sized MagnaScopic Maximum Volume Mascara with the purchase of any MagnaScopic Maximum Volume Mascara.

Additional Bonus

Receive an additional denim handbag with the purchase of ₱2,500 inclusive of a MagnaScopic Maximum Volume Mascara.

Only from May 16 – 31, 2003.

Not valid with value sets and accessories.

Per DTI-NCR Permit #1742 Series of 2003

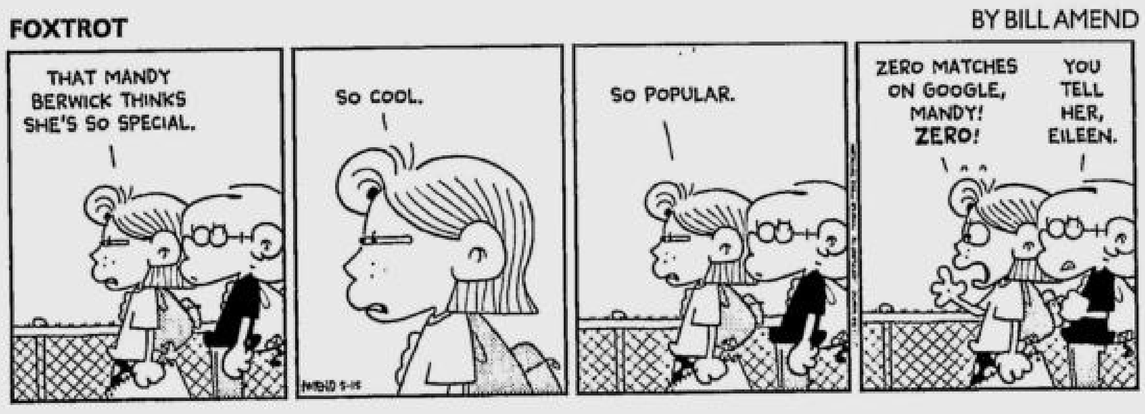
Exclusively available at:

Rustan's
MAKATI • SHANGRI-LA PLAZA • ALABANG • CEBU AYALA
Makati, Tel. No. 817 1884
Shangri-La Plaza, Tel. No. 633 4636 local 106
Alabang, Tel. No. 850 5532 local 101
Cebu Ayala, Tel. No. 231 5641

Beauty bar
Level 1, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati
Tel No. 892 3166 & 892 3153

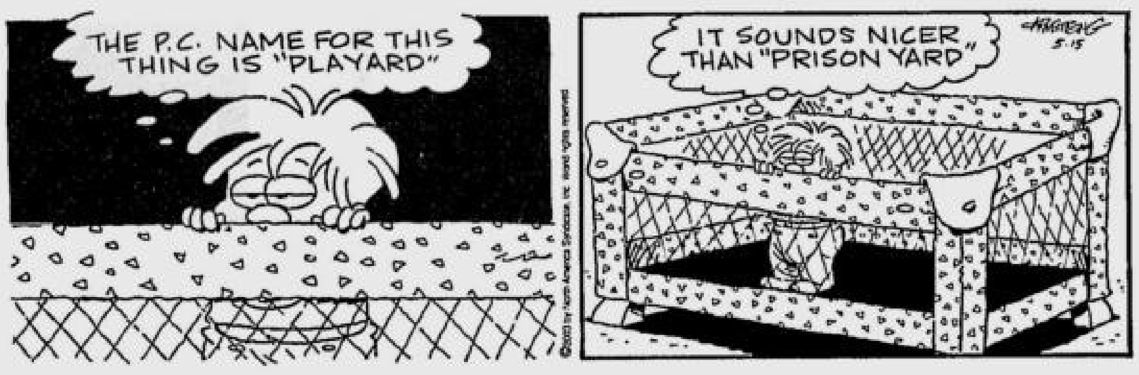
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


THAT MANDY BERWICK THINKS SHE'S SO SPECIAL.
SO COOL.
SO POPULAR.
ZERO MATCHES ON GOOGLE, MANDY! ZERO!
YOU TELL HER, EILEEN.

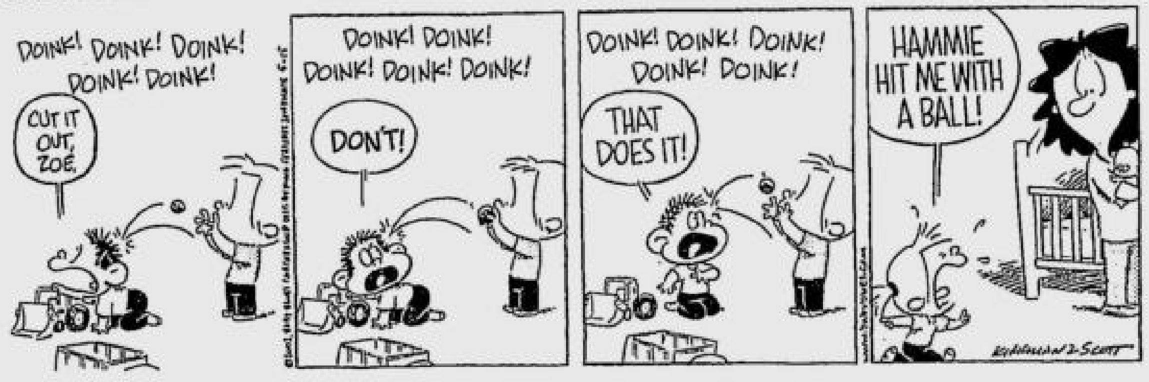
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THE P.C. NAME FOR THIS THING IS "PLAYARD"
IT SOUNDS NICER THAN "PRISON YARD"

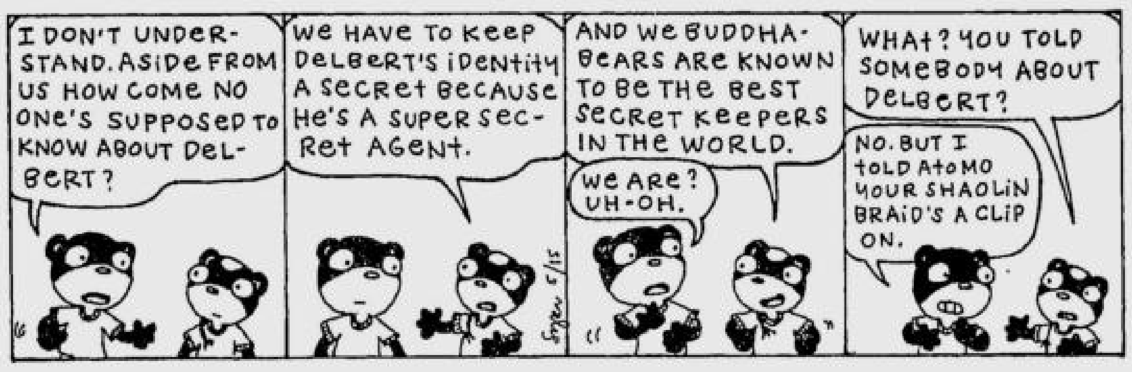
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DOINK! DOINK! DOINK! DOINK! DOINK!
CUT IT OUT, ZOE.
DOINK! DOINK! DOINK! DOINK! DOINK!
DON'T!
DOINK! DOINK! DOINK! DOINK! DOINK!
THAT DOES IT!
HAMMIE HIT ME WITH A BALL!

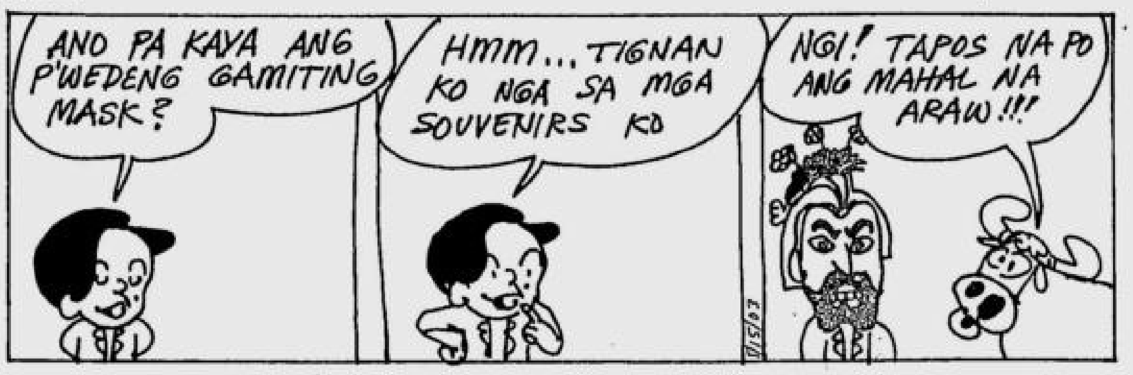
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I DON'T UNDERSTAND. ASIDE FROM US HOW COME NO ONE'S SUPPOSED TO KNOW ABOUT DELBERT?
WE HAVE TO KEEP DELBERT'S IDENTITY A SECRET BECAUSE HE'S A SUPER SECRET AGENT.
AND WE BUDDHA-BEARS ARE KNOWN TO BE THE BEST SECRET KEEPERS IN THE WORLD.
WE ARE? UH-OH.
WHAT? YOU TOLD SOMEBODY ABOUT DELBERT?
NO. BUT I TOLD ATOMO YOUR SHAOLIN BRAID'S A CLIP ON.

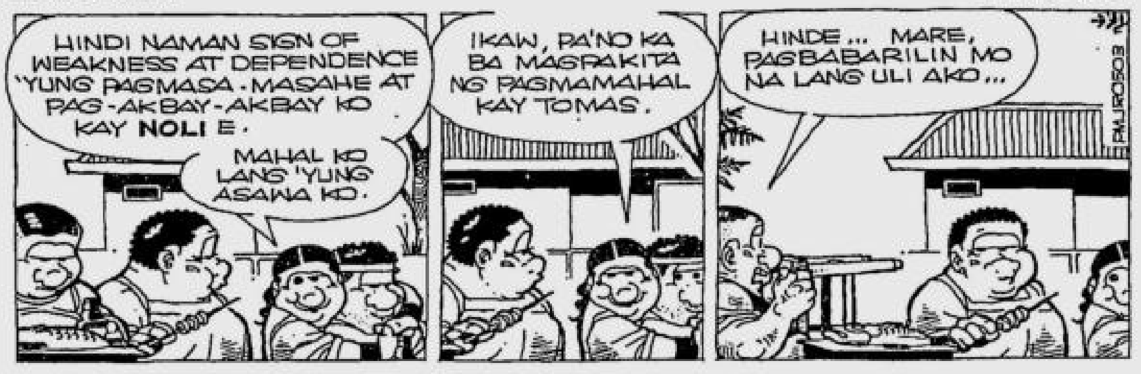
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANO PA KAYA ANG P'WEDENG GAMITING MASK?
HMM... TIGNAN KO NGA SA MGA SOUVENIRS KO
NGI! TAPOS NA PO ANG MAHAL NA ARAW!!!

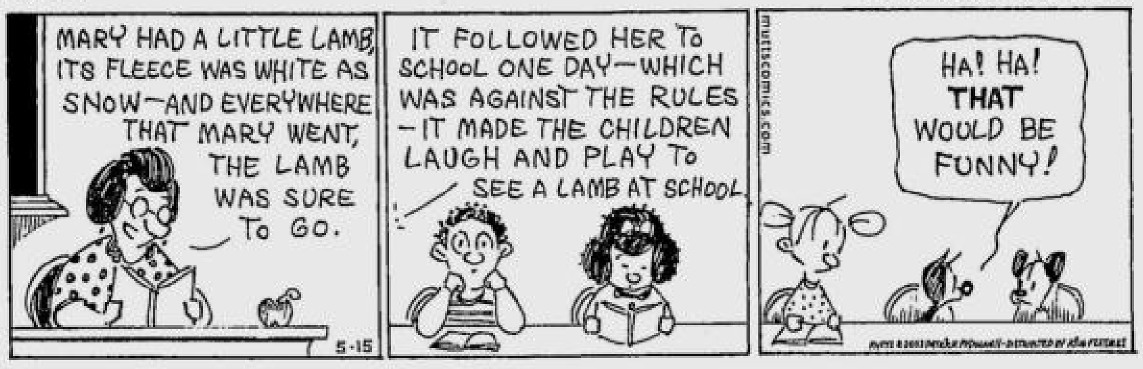
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI NAMAN SIGN OF WEAKNESS AT DEPENDENCE 'YUNG PAGMASA-MASAHE AT PAG-AKBAY-AKBAY KO KAY NOLI E.
MAHAL KO LANG 'YUNG ASAWA KO.
IKAW, PA'NO KA BA MAGPAKITA NG PAGMAMAHAL KAY TOMAS.
HINDE... MARE, PAGBABARILIN MO NA LANG ULI AKO...

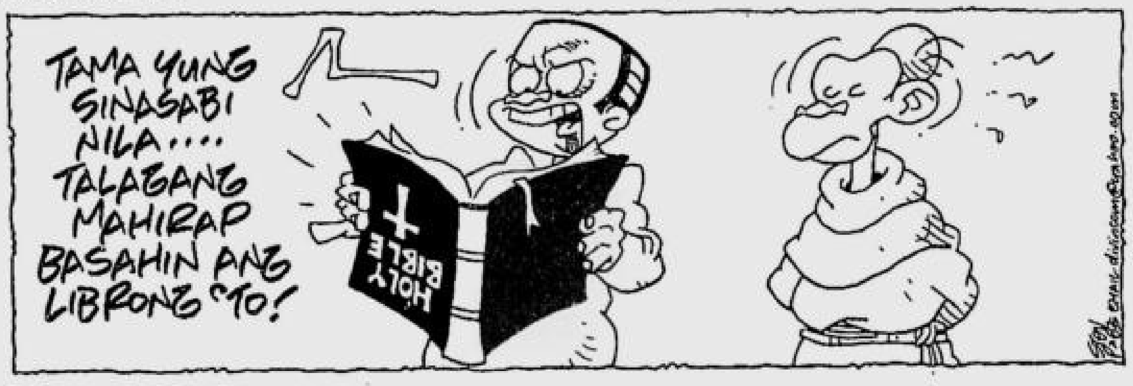
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB, ITS FLEECE WAS WHITE AS SNOW—AND EVERYWHERE THAT MARY WENT, THE LAMB WAS SURE TO GO.
IT FOLLOWED HER TO SCHOOL ONE DAY—WHICH WAS AGAINST THE RULES —IT MADE THE CHILDREN LAUGH AND PLAY TO SEE A LAMB AT SCHOOL.
HA! HA! THAT WOULD BE FUNNY!
muttscomics.com

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


TAMA YUNG SINASABI NILA.... TALAGANG MAHIRAP BASAHIN ANG LIBRONG 'TO!
HOLY BIBLE

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Many of you are extroverted, uninhibited characters. (But not all.) Either way, you know how to express yourself with flair when you want to. You always appear poised and self-assured. Sophistication comes easily to you. You like to dress well and create a good impression. This year can be one of the best years of your life! Go after whatever you want.

Birthdate of: Janet Jackson, singer; Liberace, pianist/entertainer; Pierce Brosnan, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): For the next month, you actually have more power than usual to attract money to you. Sound too good to be true? Keep your mind (and pockets) open.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your desire to relate to others is increasingly strong now. That's why today and the next few weeks are the perfect time to make peace with others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You find it easy to be selfless now with respect to others. If a loved one asks for your assistance at this time, fortunately you can deliver the goods.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The next few weeks are one of the very best times to enjoy activities with friends. Accept invitations! Any group setting—parties, meetings or sports—will give you joy and happiness.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Lucky you! The stars are now creating favorable circumstances for your business and professional life. Expect to be doing more artistic and creative or design work.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Different and unusual people appeal to you now. Try to visit places you have never been to before, and do things that are uncommon or novel.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your passionate sign is aroused now and for the next several weeks. New love could begin. If it does, it will certainly be memorable!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You find it easier to express your affection to partners and close friends now. Without any effort on your part, you are suddenly in tune with others and able to enjoy a happy balance.

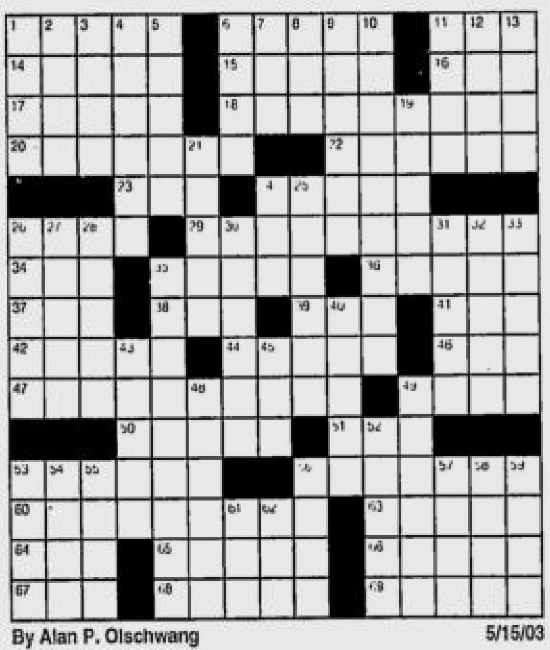
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Everything to do with your work and employment improves now. In large measure, this is due to warmer relations with superiors and co-workers.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The next few weeks are a marvelous time to relate to children and enjoy playful activities with them. In fact, you want to be a child again yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Starting today you have an increasing desire to enjoy the peace and quiet of your own home. Redecorating might appeal to you. You want to feel safe in the warmth of your own family.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Look for opportunities to encounter beauty in your everyday surroundings. Ironically, you're probably surrounded by beauty now. Open your eyes.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

5/15/03

ACROSS
1 Takes it easy
6 Declares
11 That girl
14 Bandleader Shaw
15 Start of Spike Milligan quote
16 __ Marie Saint
17 Plant fiber
18 Like some equations
20 Part 2 of quote
22 In an equitable manner
23 Military grp.
24 Max and Buddy
26 Put one's foot down?
29 Part 3 of quote
34 Mouths: Lat.
35 Ypres by another name
36 Band
37 Part 4 of quote
38 Metric meas.
39 Simian
41 Part 5 of quote
42 Fuming
44 Chair designer
46 Behave humanly?
47 Part 6 of quote
49 Attention-getting sound
50 With animation, in music
51 Land in the Seine?
53 Ancient Greek sculptor
56 Part 7 of quote
60 Long, slender cigar
63 Barrel part
64 Circle part
65 End of quote
66 Actress Barkin
67 PGA prop
68 Jockey's controls
69 Raises

DOWN
1 Not of the cloth
2 Approximately
3 Westernmost of the Aleutians
4 Top off
5 Plant starters
6 Latin lesson word
7 U of Tenn. student
8 Chang's twin
9 Sailor's jacket
10 Voluptuaries
11 Get an earful
12 Satan's realm
13 Risque
19 Stairway segment
21 International prize
24 Automatic advance in a tournament
25 Typical ski lodge
26 Ferber novel
27 Cornwall town
28 Bother
30 Bothers
31 British poet Alfred
32 Cabinet features
33 Sudden gush
35 Winter sailor
40 Grave risk
43 Florida port
45 Trinidad sprinter Boldon
48 Ancient Jewish ascetic
49 Mashing tool
52 Kind of beam
53 Brief quarrel
54 TLC part
55 Nursery rhyme opener
56 Small islands
57 Casa part
58 Concluded
59 Marshes
61 Honolulu handout
62 K-O connection

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	O	R	K	■	T	A	L	C	■	M	E	R	C	I
E	L	A	N	■	I	D	Y	L	■	A	R	E	A	S
S	I	Z	E	■	N	I	N	E	■	D	R	I	L	L
O	O	Z	E	S	C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	C	E
■	■	■	■	H	A	S	■	■	R	E	D	■	■	■
P	I	S	T	O	N	■	M	O	A	N	■	E	L	M
U	N	C	A	P	■	S	O	O	T	■	S	L	O	E
T	U	R	N	S	O	N	T	H	E	C	H	A	R	M
T	R	E	K	■	V	I	E	S	■	O	U	T	D	O
Y	E	W	■	P	U	T	S	■	U	N	L	E	S	S
■	■	■	O	I	L	■	■	R	P	I	■	■	■	■
D	A	Z	Z	L	E	S	T	H	E	C	R	O	W	D
A	L	O	O	F	■	A	E	O	N	■	E	G	A	D
S	T	O	N	E	■	R	E	N	D	■	A	R	I	A
H	O	M	E	R	■	A	M	E	S	■	D	E	F	Y

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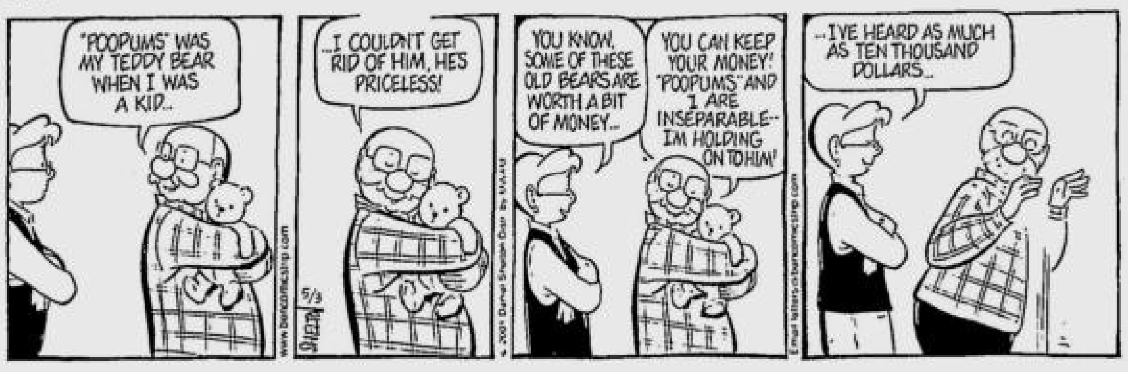
5/15/03

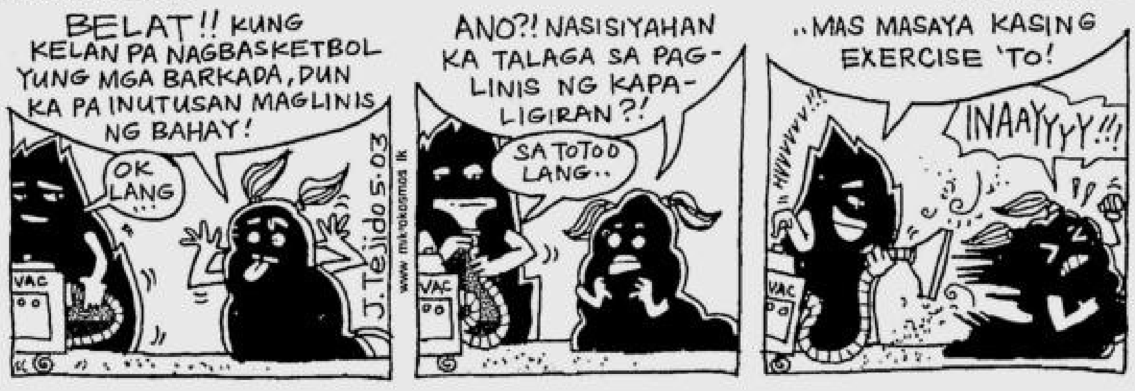
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


"POOPUMS" WAS MY TEDDY BEAR WHEN I WAS A KID...
...I COULDN'T GET RID OF HIM, HE'S PRICELESS!
YOU KNOW, SOME OF THESE OLD BEARS ARE WORTH A BIT OF MONEY...
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR MONEY! "POOPUMS" AND I ARE INSEPARABLE-- I'M HOLDING ON TO HIM!
...I'VE HEARD AS MUCH AS TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS...

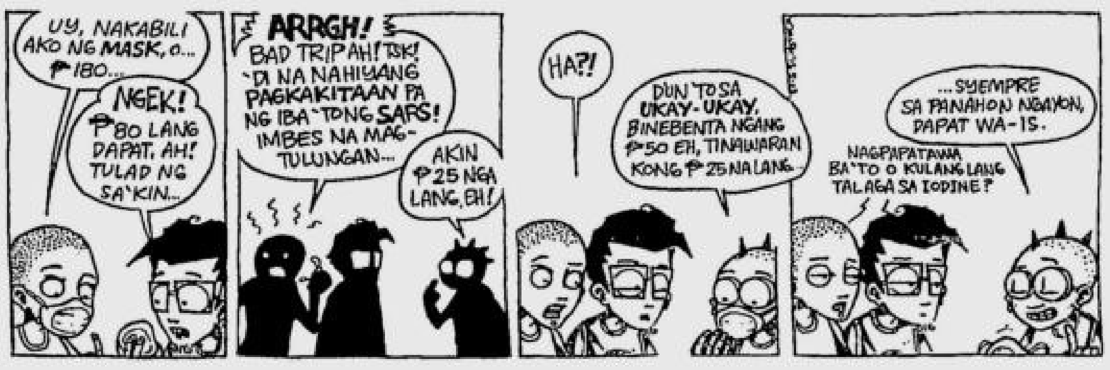
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BELAT!! KUNG KELAN PA NAGBASKETBOL YUNG MGA BARKADA, DUN KA PA INUTUSAN MAGLINIS NG BAHAY!
OK LANG
J. Tejido 5.03
ANO?! NASISIYAHAN KA TALAGA SA PAGLINIS NG KAPALIGIRAN?!
SA TOTOO LANG..
..MAS MASAYA KASING EXERCISE 'TO!
INAAYYYY!!!
VAC

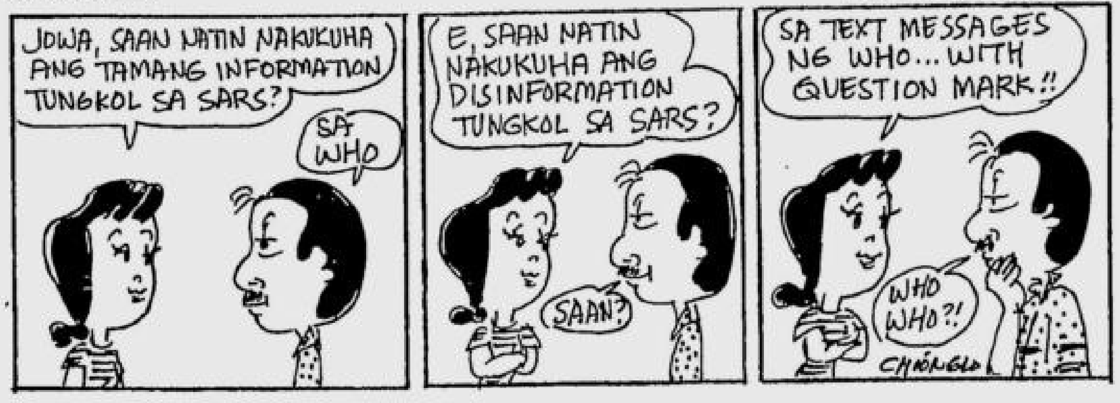
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY, NAKABILI AKO NG MASK, O... ₱180...
NGEK! ₱80 LANG DAPAT, AH! TULAD NG SA'KIN...
ARRGH! BAD TRIP AH! TSK! 'DI NA NAHIYANG PAGKAKITAAN PA NG IBA 'TONG SARS! IMBES NA MAGTULUNGAN...
AKIN ₱25 NGA LANG, EH!
HA?!
DUN 'TO SA UKAY-UKAY, BINEBENTA NGANG ₱50 EH, TINAWARAN KONG ₱25 NA LANG.
...SYEMPRE SA PANAHON NGAYON, DAPAT WA-IS.
NAGPAPATAWA BA 'TO O KULANG LANG TALAGA SA IODINE?

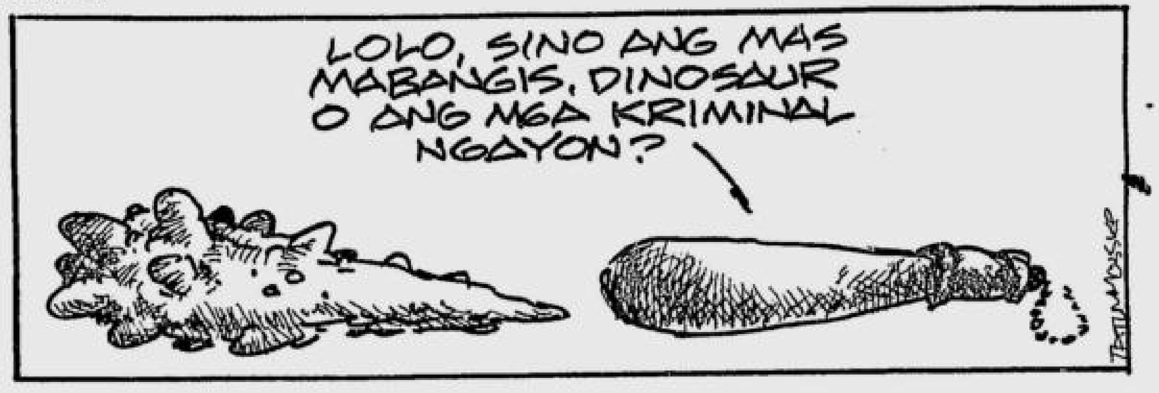
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, SAAN NATIN NAKUKUHA ANG TAMANG INFORMATION TUNGKOL SA SARS?
SA WHO
E, SAAN NATIN NAKUKUHA ANG DISINFORMATION TUNGKOL SA SARS?
SAAN?
SA TEXT MESSAGES NG WHO... WITH QUESTION MARK!!
WHO WHO?!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


LOLO, SINO ANG MAS MABANGIS, DINOSAUR O ANG MGA KRIMINAL NGAYON?

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DIANA TUNA
SARDINES STYLE
DIANA BRAND
TUNA FLAKES IN TOMATO SAUCE SARDINES STYLE
Omega 3
HOT
PHILBEST

Sarap ng Tuna, sa presyong sardinas!

Presyo ng pangunahing bilihin nag-dive!

Matapos aprubahan ng mga mamimili ang sarap ng bagong Diana Tuna ay muli itong sumang-ayon sa panibagong pambato ng mga tuna experts. Ayon sa kanila ay patok na patok sa masa ang produktong ito. Nadale na raw ang sarap ng tuna sa presyong sardinas, dahil ngayon ay meron ng Diana Tuna "Sardines Style". Samantala, tuwang-tuwa naman ang mga fans ng sardinas dahil sa wakas, ang sustansiya at sarap ng sariwang tuna ay matitikman na ng buong pamilya.

Tuna vs. Cancer

Tuna, the nutritious fish from the sea, is an excellent source of disease-fighting nutrients such as Omega 3. Fresh or frozen, tuna is a good supplier of Omega 3, the friendly fatty acids that are considered essential nutrients for good health.

Research shows that a diet high in Omega 3 helps reduce the risk of cancer and coronary heart diseases. Studies further show that cancer is less common in communities that eat large amounts of fish like tuna. Japanese women for instance have a very low rate of breast cancer. There has also been a decrease in the rate of prostate cancer cases among men in these communities. Stomach and intestinal cancers also appear to be less common among people who include tuna regularly in their diets.

So how does Omega 3 fight these killer diseases? Omega 3 fatty acids are known to produce Transforming Growth Factor Beta Receptor Type II or TGFbrII, a molecule that keeps the production of cancer cells under control. Studies also show that Omega 3 promotes the self-destruction of cancer cells and even helps reduce the level of a hormone-like substance that has been proven to be present in high amounts in cancer-stricken individuals.

Omega 3 contains Eicosapentaenoic Acid or EPA as well. EPA is a type of fatty acid that has the ability to thin blood thus maintaining a healthy blood flow. The absence of sticky blood therefore reduces the risk of heart diseases.

Among the known sources of Omega 3, tuna is considered to be one of the richest. The fresher the tuna that goes into the can, the higher the level of Omega 3 that gets preserved. This is precisely why canners like ***PhilBest Canning Corporation makes*** sure that only the freshest catch goes into every can of Diana Tuna. ***PhilBest Canning Corporation*** has its own fleet of fishing vessels, thus assuring a swift delivery of fish from the sea to the canning facilities.

With all the goodness of tuna, its inclusion in your regular diet is therefore vital. And with Diana's Tuna Sardines-Style plus its line of special Tuna Recados—Méchado, Caldereta, Adobo, Afritada and Hot& Spicy, you get to please your palate with a wide range of tastes and enjoy the health benefits of tuna as well.

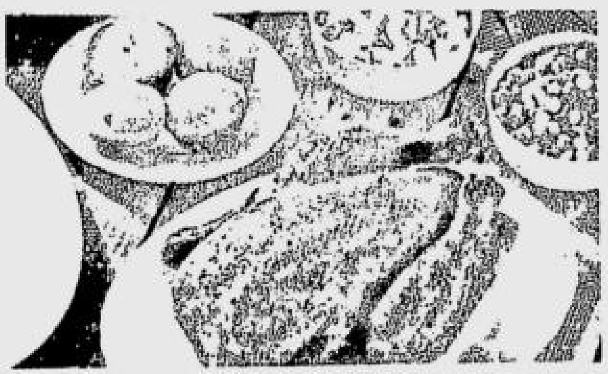
ADVT.

Month-long festival . . .

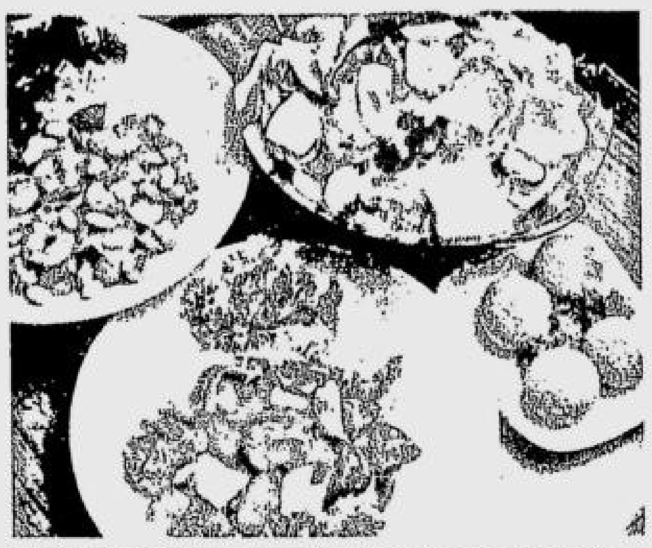
From page F1

carrot and walnut. The hotel's Garden Café offers a lunch and dinner buffet. Aside from daily stations such as Japanese, Make Your Own Salad, and Roast US Prime Rib Carvery, there are crispy fried garoupa carvery, smoked salmon with condiments and cheese station. Call 634-7373 or 633-8888 local 2738 or 2739.

KENNY Rogers' group meals come in three affordable chicken meal packages, complete with side dishes and Kenny's famous corn muffins. The meals are available for dine-in, take-out and delivery at all Kenny Rogers outlets.



KENNY Rogers' group meals



SUPERBOWL'S Szechuan Prawns, Crispy Noodles with Assorted Seafood, Fried Sesame Ball and Sweet and Sour Pork

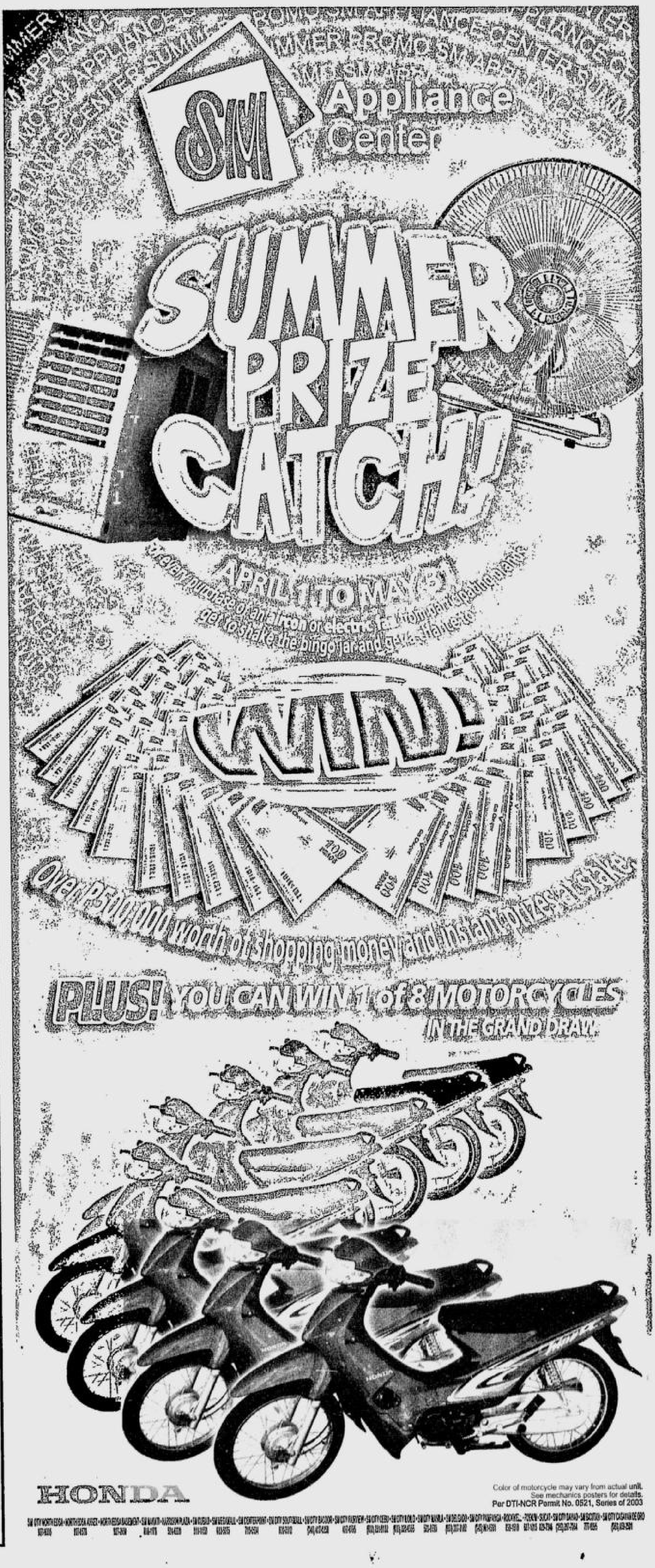

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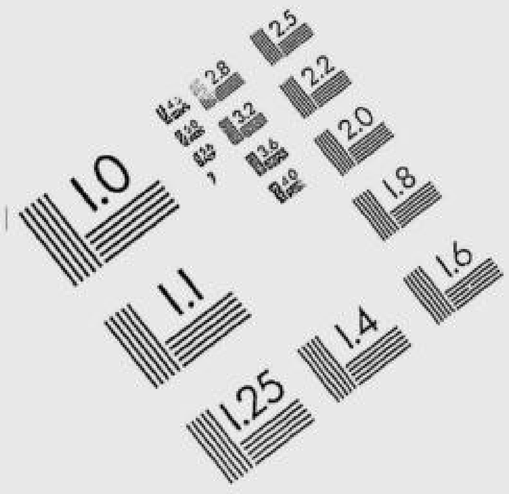
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)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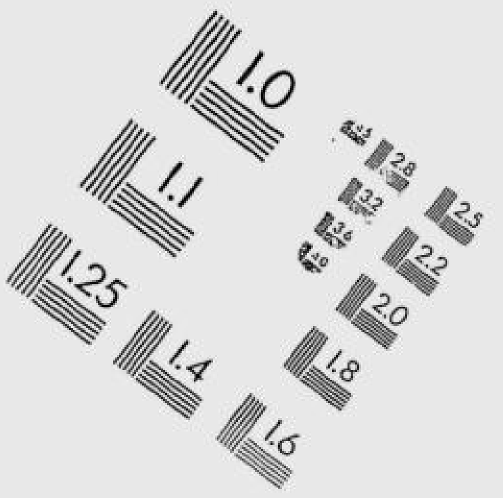
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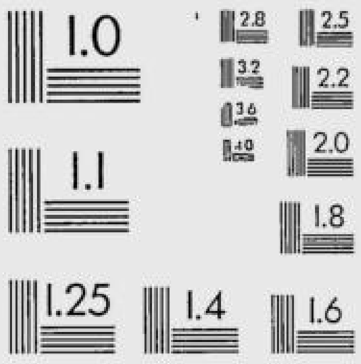
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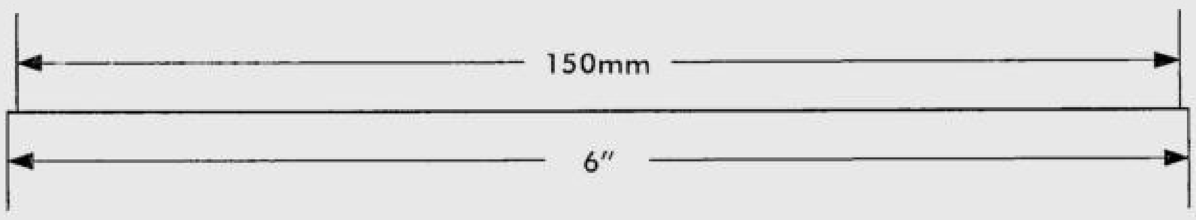

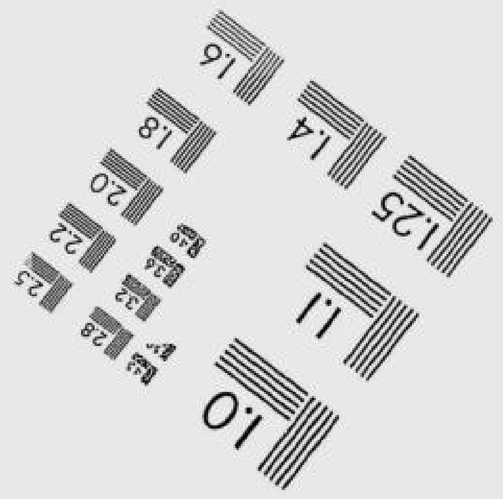
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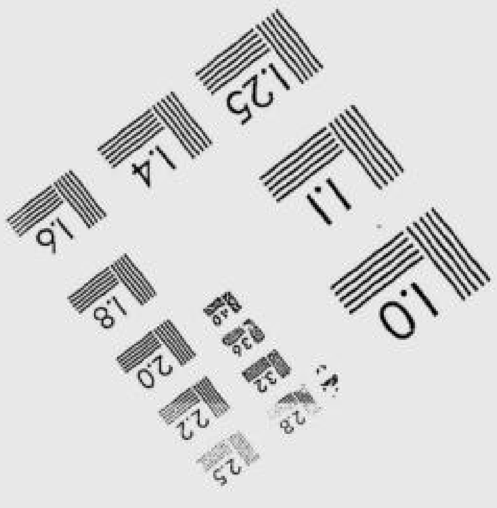
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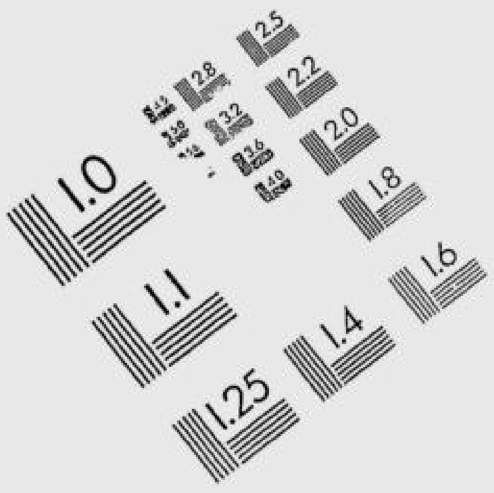
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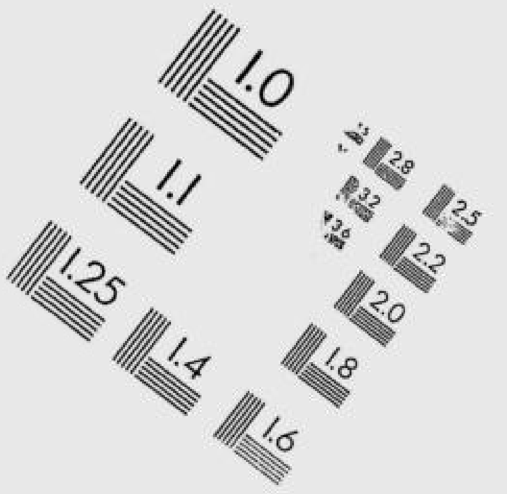
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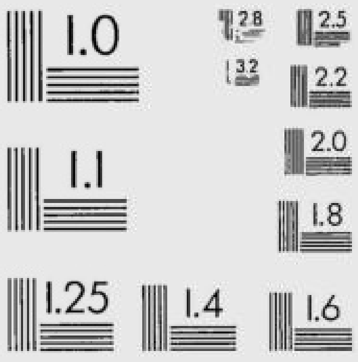
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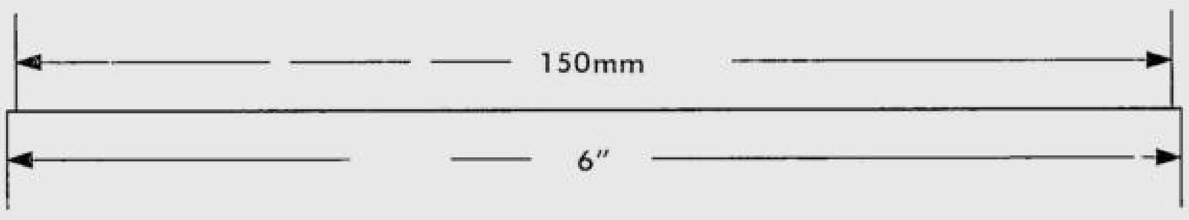

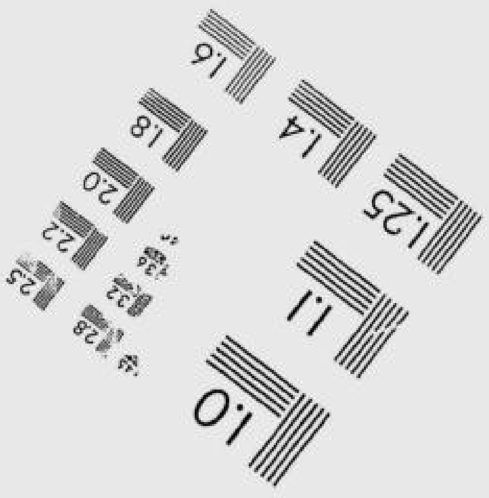
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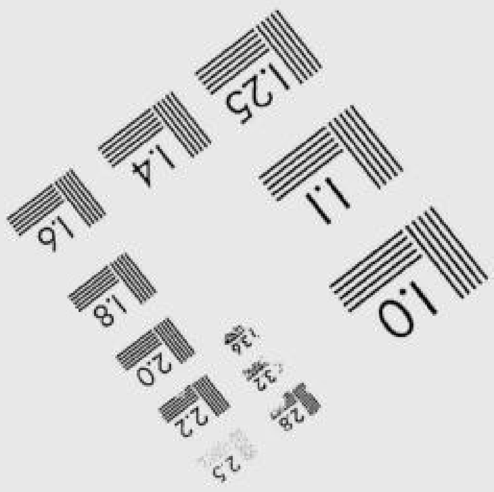
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